

## G-8 summit to discuss Mideast peace process

PARIS (AP) — The Middle East peace process will be discussed at this weekend's summit meeting of the world's eight most industrialised nations, French President Jacques Chirac's spokeswoman said Tuesday. Mr. Chirac, in a meeting with visiting U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan, said Israel's refusal of U.S. proposals creates a "dangerous and precarious situation," according to spokeswoman Catherine Colonna. In his discussion with Mr. Annan, Mr. Chirac expressed his "very great concern over the persistent blockage of the peace process," said Ms. Colonna. "and in particular at the refusal of the Israeli government to accept the American proposals or even go to Washington to discuss them." Ms. Colonna said the peace process would be brought up at the summit of the eight nations in Birmingham, England.

Volume 23 Number 6837

AMMAN WEDNESDAY, MAY 13, 1998, MUHARRAM 17, 1419

Price: Jordan 200 fils

# Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published by the Jordan Press Foundation  
جوردان تايمز يومية سياسية تصدر بالانجليزية عن المؤسسة الصحفية الأردنية، الرأى.

## Iraqis send million letters to France

BAGHDAD (AFP) — Iraqi mothers and children have related the hardships of life under U.N. sanctions in more than one million messages to be delivered to France. The information ministry on Tuesday handed over the messages, in several white sacks, to the French humanitarian organisation Equilibre, which has repeatedly called for the sanctions to be lifted. Alain Michel, president of Equilibre, told reporters that "these letters will give French public opinion an insight into the scope of Iraqi suffering because of the sanctions being kept in place." They will be translated into several languages and passed on to international organisations such as the World Court, while Equilibre will try to collect a million letters in France itself against the sanctions.

## Inaugurating Karamah Dam King says Arafat has done all he could to break peace standstill

AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein said Tuesday that the peace process will run its course despite all obstacles, stressing that justice will eventually prevail. "We are monitoring and following up the developments," the King said in remarks to the press following his inauguration of the Karamah Dam in the Jordan Valley. Present were HRH Crown Prince Hassan, Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali and other officials. King Hussein praised the Palestinian position towards the American proposals to break the stalled peace process describing it as positive and constructive. "President Arafat has done all that he could and has adopted a constructive position towards the U.S. proposals and we are waiting to see what the U.S., who is a partner in the peace-making process, will do, having presented its own proposals to the concerned parties." Stressing that the U.S. is a major partner in achieving regional peace, the King said: "I believe Israel is as indebted to the U.S. as many other countries in the region."



His Majesty King Hussein talks to reporters at the inauguration ceremony of the Karamah Dam on Tuesday as His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali and water minister, Munther Haddadin, listen (Photo by Yousef Allan)

Munther Haddadin, the King unveiled the plaque commemorating the inauguration and presented gifts and medals to engineers and other officials who were a part of the project. Accompanied by the Crown Prince and other officials the King inspected the operations control room, the pumping stations and other sections of the dam site. Built by a consortium of local and foreign firms, the dam is 45 metres high and 2,150 metres long and includes facilities to pump water to the King Abdullah Canal for the irrigation of 60,000 dunums in the Jordan Valley. The dam cost nearly JD 51 million of which 45 per cent was provided by the state treasury and the rest came as a loan from the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development. The dam, with a capacity to store up to 55 million cubic metres of rain water, was built to be quake resistant, and can withstand tremors known to be affecting the Jordan Rift Valley region.

## Sahhaf: No rush for dialogue with U.S.

By Tareq Ayyoub  
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Iraqi Foreign Minister Mohammad Sahhaf said on Tuesday Baghdad was "in no rush" to start a political dialogue with the United States, its arch-enemy since the 1990-91 Gulf crisis. He told a press conference in Amman that United Nations sanctions against Baghdad remain in place because of U.S. and British efforts to dominate Arab countries. Mr. Sahhaf, in Jordan as part of a tour that will also take him to Asia, Africa, Europe and Latin America to lobby for the lifting of sanctions, insisted Iraq has destroyed all its banned weapons of mass destruction — a main condition for lifting the embargo imposed on Iraq after it invaded Kuwait in August 1990, sparking the crisis. "There is no logic in the

U.S. and U.K. anti-Iraq attitude," Mr. Sahhaf said. U.N. weapons inspectors have repeatedly said they suspect that Iraq is hiding key components of its banned weapons programme. Mr. Sahhaf said sanctions "will be lifted whether the others accept or not. We will encourage people to break sanctions." He did not say how this will happen. "Regarding our crisis with the United States, we have repeatedly said that Iraq prefers to have a dialogue... and we say that dialogue is the basis for resolving differences," he added. "It depends on the other party which has to decide whether it is willing to launch such a dialogue," Mr. Sahhaf continued. "But we are not in a rush to enter into a dialogue with the United States." Washington has repeatedly said it saw no need for such a dialogue and wants Iraq to comply with all U.N. resolutions to ease regional tension and end sanctions. He said U.N. sanctions imposed on Iraq have remained for political reasons "which are antagonistic to Iraq, its leadership and people." He said the hardline stand of Washington and London towards lifting the sanctions "was a matter that was not only confined to Iraq. This hatred, this anti-Iraq position, is in fact, anti-Arab and is part of their policy of imposing their hegemony on the Arab Nation." Mr. Sahhaf added: "There is no logic in the U.S. and U.K.'s anti-Iraq attitude. We hope that they will realise that their policies will fail for sure." He added that the right approach "is the one based on guaranteeing mutual

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## Palestinians: Israeli troop withdrawal in installments will not be acceptable

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AP) — The Palestinians said Tuesday they would insist on an immediate Israeli troop withdrawal from 13.1 per cent of the West Bank, as proposed by Washington, and would not accept a new Israeli plan to hand over the land in two installments. The chief Palestinian negotiator, Saeb Erekat, said he was assured repeatedly by U.S. officials — most recently Monday night — that the American proposal would not be watered down. Israel has not made its new plan public, but Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was expected to raise it when he meets with U.S. Secretary of State Albright on Wednesday. The meeting is seen as the last attempt by the United States to win Israeli acceptance of its withdrawal plan. Mr. Netanyahu has said in the past that Israel could hand over no more than 9 per cent of the West Bank to Palestinian rule, citing Israeli security concerns. Under his new proposal, Israel would withdraw from 9 per cent now. The United States would determine the timing of the handover of the last 4 per cent, linking the transfer to Palestinian measures to rein in militants, and hostile propaganda against Israel and revise a provision of their covenant calling for Israel's destruction. Palestinians said the Israeli proposal was unacceptable. "The Americans were in touch

## Albright works to defend U.S. policy ahead of Netanyahu visit

WASHINGTON (AFP) — Secretary of State Madeleine Albright was to begin an offensive with the U.S. public Tuesday defending Washington's pressure on Israel one day before a crucial meeting with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. In an address at the National Press Club, Ms. Albright was expected to "describe the efforts the United States has undertaken and the role it has played to promote peace in the Middle East," a State Department statement said. But U.S. officials said Ms. Albright would not take aim at Israel for its refusal to accept U.S. proposals calling for a 13-per cent withdrawal from the West Bank to help advance the peace process with the Palestinians. "We are not in any kind of a mode of being hard on Israel at all," said an official. "It makes no sense to be seen in public as getting all over Israel. All that does is stir people up, make things more difficult," said the official, who asked not to be named. The State Department said that Ms. Albright would set the stage for her planned meeting with Mr. Netanyahu here Wednesday in the address by underscoring the "importance" of the talks. Officials hope the talks will yield agreement on a new date for a summit. "Her address will emphasise the critical importance of breaking the 15-month stalemate in the peace negotiations," the statement said. The address scheduled to begin at 3:00

## In unscheduled Paris meeting Annan, Aziz reiterate will to overcome 'problems'

PARIS (AFP) — U.N. Chief Kofi Annan and Iraqi Deputy Premier Tareq Aziz pledged to work hand-in-hand to speed up weapons inspections and overcome "problems" at their first encounter Tuesday since a February deal that averted a military showdown. Reiterating Baghdad's pleas for a quick lifting of the crippling eight-year sanctions, Mr. Aziz said after a surprise 30-minute encounter with Mr. Annan at a luxury Paris hotel that he was enlisting the Secretary-General's help in accelerating weapons inspections. "Relations between Iraq and the U.N. secretary-general are good relations. We are working in good faith," Mr. Aziz said at an impromptu news conference held at the turn of a staircase in the hotel after unscheduled talks between the pair, both on visits to Paris. But both Mr. Annan and Mr. Aziz referred to "problems" with the U.N. Special Commission on Disarming Iraq, UNSCOM, without specifying their nature. "I am satisfied things have much improved and that Iraq has lived up to its obligations," Mr. Annan said after the talks. But he said that Mr. Aziz had



U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan and Iraq's Deputy Prime Minister Tareq Aziz answer to journalists questions at the Hotel Crillon Tuesday in Paris (AFP photo)

called on the U.N. "to live up to our commitments. He believes things can be improved on our side." "They want to cooperate with the United Nations to get sanctions behind them as soon as possible," the U.N. chief added. A diplomat who asked not to be identified said Iraq believed there were continuing snags with the UNSCOM team inspecting suspect Iraqi weapon sites. The diplomat said Baghdad considered the latest report by UNSCOM chief Richard Butler was too vague and failed to list the specific conditions under which the U.N. could lift the sanctions. "They fear the sanctions could go on for ever," the source said, referring to the sanctions imposed United Nations after Iraq's 1990 invasion of Kuwait. They cannot be lifted until UNSCOM declares Iraq free of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons as well as long-range missiles and monitoring is in place. Mr. Aziz said Baghdad wanted to see UNSCOM "honour the letter and spirit" of the February 23 memorandum struck by Mr. Annan in Baghdad to avoid military intervention against Iraq amid a

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## Shbeilat sentenced to 9 months

By Rana Hussein  
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The State Security Court on Tuesday sentenced Leith Shbeilat to nine months in jail for instigating pro-Iraqi riots in the southern town of Ma'in in February that left one dead and 24 others injured. Mr. Shbeilat, 56, stood silently outside the dock as the verdict was read out by Colonel Yousef Faouri, a military judge presiding over a three-man tribunal. Mr. Shbeilat resisted policemen who handcuffed him after the judge ordered his immediate transfer to jail and insisted the procedure should be carried out outside the heavily-guarded and packed courtroom. Mr. Shbeilat was released on a JD2,000 bail in April after spending almost eight weeks in detention. His defence attorney Hussein Mjalli, said he will appeal the verdict. "We hope that legal decisions are not influenced by political opinions," he told a news conference at the Professional Associations Complex after the court verdict was issued. "The verdict is subject to appeal, and this is all that I have to say for now." He said he would appeal

against the court sentence and its decision to send him to jail immediately. "The penalty for such a charge [instigating riots] should not exceed four months in jail," Mr. Mjalli said. "My client should not be detained because he was released on bail." However, a judicial source told the Jordan Times that instigating riots is considered a felony that is punishable by up to a year in jail. He also said that the State Security Court had the right to order Mr. Shbeilat's immediate detention even though he

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## MPs slam British diplomats over newest scam at Amman embassy

LONDON (R) — A powerful parliamentary committee on Wednesday denounced another costly fraud at the British embassy in Amman and said diplomats must stop looking on sound financial management "as a second-order activity."

The all-party public accounts committee said in a report that a locally-engaged accountant had netted at least \$178,000 in a "scam" involving duplicate payments for fuel bills.

The new scandal emerged

less than a year after the committee reported on the activities of this accountant's predecessor, who it said had obtained \$540,000 by forging certificates for payments to the families of dead pensioners.

The committee's report said that the embassy's senior management officer had been reprimanded for his failure to monitor spending more closely and forced to take early retirement.

His assistant had been admonished and letters of warning had been written to

two other senior embassy staff.

But it said the reprimand would have only minimal effect on the senior management officer, and no financial impact. In fact he was receiving up to \$51,700 more in lump sum payments than if he had worked until normal retirement age.

"Having regard to their extent, size and the period over which those irregularities took place, we regard the disciplinary action taken against him as inadequate," the report said.

David Davis, chairman of the committee, said: "The culture in the diplomatic service which seems to regard financial management as a second-order activity must end immediately."

"Staff responsible for checking local spending must do the job properly, and should know that negligence in these important matters will be subject to very rigorous disciplinary action," added Mr. Davis, a Conservative who was a junior foreign office minister until last year's election.

## Million Palestinians to join 'nakba' marches Thursday — organisers

GAZA CITY (AFP) — The Palestinians plan massive marches of up to a million people on Thursday throughout the Gaza Strip and the West Bank to demand their own state, organizers said on Tuesday.

But the marches will be under a heavy presence by Palestinian security forces in a bid to prevent any clashes with Israeli forces in the occupied territories, said Hassan Kashef, the Gaza coordinator for the march.

"In the march, the Palestinian people are announcing, 'We are here,' and that we have a right to self-determination and to announce our own independent state," Mr. Kashef told Agency France Presse.

The march is to be launched from all villages and towns in the West Bank and Gaza Strip at 10:00 a.m. on Thursday, marking the "nakba," or "catastrophe" as Palestinians call the war surrounding the creation of Israel on May 14, 1948.

Palestinians in neighboring Arab countries are also called on to hold marches.

"We expect participation to

be great. I hope we will reach a million people in the territories," Mr. Kashef said. Advertisements for the march have flooded Palestinian television, radio and newspapers.

Mr. Kashef said the Palestinians had coordinated with Israeli security officials to prevent any clashes between demonstrators and Israeli troops stationed at checkpoints throughout the territories and around settlements.

"Security services will be put on a state of emergency status. Our side will do everything it can to prevent any friction," he said.

"But we don't always trust the Israeli government to do the right thing. We hope it will not do something stupid in the field which could lead to frictions," he said.

The action comes at a time when frustration is high with the peace process after Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's rejection of U.S. proposals to break a more than one-year deadlock in negotiations.

The marches have been organized by a joint committee set up by the Palestinian

National Authority with all other political groups, including Hamas and other opponents to the self-rule deals with Israel.

The emphasis is on unity: no pictures of political leaders will be allowed during the march, not even of Mr. Arafat himself. Only the green, red, black and white Palestinian flag and black flags marking the "nakba" will be allowed. The green banner of the Islamic Resistance Movement Hamas or flags of other groups will not be permitted at the marches.

To prepare for the march, authorities have printed up some 100,000 Palestinian flags in the Gaza Strip alone, Mr. Kashef said.

The slogan for the march will be, "In response to the nakba, statehood and return [of refugees]," he said.

At noon, a siren will go off throughout the Palestinian territories, and all movement will come to a stop for a minute. A recorded speech by Mr. Arafat is then to be broadcast, followed by a statement by the top Arab poet, Mahmoud Darwish.

## Israeli party chief may lose parliamentary immunity

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Israeli Attorney General Elyakim Rubinstein asked Knesset speaker Dan Tichon Tuesday to lift the parliamentary immunity of Shas party leader Ariele Deri, officials said.

Mr. Rubinstein plans to press five charges concerning embezzlement of government money against the leader of the party of Orthodox Jewish Sephardim, Jews of Spanish and Middle Eastern origin, the officials said.

Mr. Deri has been under investigation for nearly 10 years for allegedly embezzling public funds when he was director general of the interior ministry and later interior minister.

Shas is a crucial component of the coalition government of Benjamin Netanyahu and has 10 members serving in the Knesset.



A journalist screams for help Tuesday as a human rights activist holds the hand of Turkey's leading human rights campaigner, Akin Birdal, as he lies unconscious after being gunned down by two unidentified attackers in his office in Ankara (Reuters photo)

## Turkish human rights activist 'critical' after attack

ANKARA (AFP) — A prominent Turkish human rights activist was in critical condition after being shot by unidentified assailants in his Ankara office on Tuesday, doctors said.

Akin Birdal, chairman of Turkey's Human Rights Association (IHD), was hit by six bullets when two gunmen opened fire on him inside his office at the IHD headquarters.

He was taken to hospital for immediate surgery.

"Birdal is in very critical condition. His life is in danger at the moment," a doctor at the hospital said.

The assailants, estimated by witnesses to be in their early 20s, entered the IHD head office and asked to speak to Mr. Birdal about a problem concerning family members in police custody. They then fired on Mr. Birdal eight times, an IHD spokesman said.

Mr. Birdal, 50, was hit in the chest, leg and shoulder.

No one immediately claimed responsibility for the attack.

Mr. Birdal's lawyer, Husnu Ondul, said the activist had recently been threatened, but was denied police protection.

"Birdal received anonymous threats," Mr. Ondul told journalists outside IHD headquarters. "The Turkish state never gave him the police protection requested by the association."

Turkey's Deputy Prime Minister Bulent Ecevit, Interior Minister Murat Basoglu and other government officials were booed by the crowd on arrival at the hospital.

"Assassin state" and "find the killers," the crowd chanted.

Prime Minister Mesut Yilmaz condemned the attack and said he hoped the killers would soon be found and brought to justice.

"I am very sad about this incident and condemn it," Mr. Yilmaz said in a statement to the press.

Mr. Birdal, chairman of the IHD since 1992, has been subject to numerous prosecutions for "separatist propaganda" in connection with IHD campaigns against the armed conflict in the country's predominantly Kurdish southeast.

Mr. Birdal was sentenced to a year in prison for "separatist" statements last year. The conviction is currently being reviewed by the Court of Appeals.

A number of other trials against the IHD chairman for "separatist propaganda" are continuing.

Mr. Birdal came under further pressure in April as Turkish newspapers reported that a former commander of the separatist Kurdish Labour Party (PKK) had named him among supporters of the rebels in Turkey.

## 22 people massacred in Algerian violence

ALGIERS (AFP) — Twenty-two people were killed overnight some 20 kilometres from Oran, Algeria's second city, west of the capital, security services said Tuesday.

The massacre was near Ras Al Ain, on the road to Gdyl, a few kilometres west of Arzew, the site of a major natural gas treatment and export terminal. The region has a reputation for being dangerous.

The security forces did not say whether the victims were killed in a raid on their homes or whether they were intercepted at a false roadblock erected by Islamists, as frequently happens.

The massacre illustrates a new upsurge in Algerian violence after a lull of several weeks following a bloody Ramadan, the Muslim holy month of fasting, in which more than 1,000 civilians were slaughtered.

It also comes as security forces are pursuing a major offensive against Islamists in the mountains round Blida, south of Algiers, in Kabylia to the east, particularly the Mizana forest on the coast, and the west near the Moroccan border.

More than 50 villagers were massacred in the Medea region 80 kilometres south of Algiers in two night raids in recent days.

There have been more than

five bomb attacks in a week, leaving four people dead and dozens injured, and at least another three devices have been defused in Algiers, according to press reports.

On Sunday two people were blown to bits and 10 wounded in a bomb attack on a train at Boufarik, 30 kilometres southwest of Algiers.

The same day at Cheraga, near the capital, an armed group seized a coach but were overpowered by security forces. Witnesses said two of the hijackers were killed but there was no official confirmation.

Independent newspapers meanwhile reported Tuesday that at least 10 Islamists had been killed by security forces in the past few days in Algiers, Kabylia and the southwest.

According to Liberte, a deputy to a leader of the radical Armed Islamic Group (GIA) was killed in the casbah, the old town.

Another member of an armed group was killed in the Baimen forest adjoining Algiers and another in Thénia, east of the capital.

Five more Islamists suspected of having been involved in the massacre of eight villagers last week were killed in the Medea region.

Two more Islamists were killed in Hammam Righa, in the southwest Ain Defla region.

## Delegation heads to Egypt Friday for economic talks

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Cabinet Tuesday formed a delegation to visit Cairo on Friday to hold negotiations with the Egyptian authorities on economic issues of mutual concern.

A Cabinet statement said the delegation will group Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Jawad Anani and Minister of Industry, Trade and Supply Hami Mulki.

The Council of Ministers formed a delegation, led by Dureid Mahasneh, secretary general of the Jordan Valley Authority, to attend joint Jordanian-Syrian investment committee meeting on exploiting the waters of the Yarmouk River.

The talks, which will be held in Damascus from May 16-18, are also expected to cover the general environmental situation in the river basin, according to the statement.

In October 1997, the joint Jordanian-Syrian Yarmouk River Committee agreed to go ahead with plans to construct Al Wahdah (unity) Dam on the river, which straddles the common border, to provide the two countries with irrigation and drinking water.

Jordan at the time said the two sides discussed the construction of the dam, means of protecting

the river basin environment and future projects.

Jordan and Syria originally agreed in 1987 to build the dam but due to developments in the region, the project was not carried out.

Initial estimates put the cost of constructing the dam, which will be located in Syrian territory, at \$400 million. According to Jordanian government sources, the Kingdom is expected to acquire 85 million cubic metres of water per year from the Yarmouk River once the dam has been erected.

Also Tuesday, the Cabinet approved an agreement between the government and a Swedish charitable society to be set up in Jordan to carry out a number of educational and development projects.

The Cabinet approved a Jordanian-Spanish agreement on encouraging and protecting investments and endorsed the minutes of deliberations by a Jordanian-Spanish cultural, technical and scientific committee.

Mohammad Rawajih is to serve as honorary consul for Jordan in the Ukraine and Abdullah Kiswani will serve as Kazakhstan's consul general in Amman, according to the statement.

## Yassin plans to go to Iraq for Kuwait's missing

KUWAIT CITY (AFP) — Sheikh Ahmad Yassin, spiritual leader of the Palestinian Islamist movement, Hamas, plans to travel to Baghdad soon on a mission to help resolve the issue of Kuwaitis missing since Iraq's 1990-1991 occupation of the emirate.

"I am ready to go to the ends of the earth... to try to secure the release of the Kuwaiti prisoners, because it's time this file was closed," Sheikh Yassin said.

"I have decided to put myself in the service of the POWs and their families. I will make contacts with our Iraqi brothers to arrange for the visit," he said in a meeting here late Monday with families of the missing.

"I hope our brothers in Iraq will respond by agreeing to

reopen the file," Sheikh Yassin said, adding that his initiative had the blessing of the Kuwaiti leadership.

Kuwait accuses Iraq of holding some 600 Kuwaitis and other residents of the emirate who were reported missing after the 1991 Gulf war in which Iraqi troops were evicted.

Iraq admits its army took prisoners at the end of the seven-month occupation but says the authorities lost track of them in a southern uprising which followed the army's defeat.

Sheikh Yassin, guide and founder of Hamas, met Emir Jaber Al Ahmad Al Sabah on Tuesday, the fourth day of his visit to Kuwait. His visit is the first by a Palestinian leader since the Gulf war.

## Islamic hardliners disrupt surgeons' seminar in Tehran

TEHRAN (AFP) — Around 40 Islamic hardliners stormed into a conference of Iranian surgeons in Tehran to demand an apology for critical comments made by a surgeon against the commander of the Revolutionary Guards, newspapers reported Tuesday.

The hardliners, dressed in identical clothing, closed the doors of the conference in northern Tehran at around noon on Monday and prevented people from entering or leaving, Hamsbahri daily said.

Their spokesman took over the microphone and demanded an apology from a surgeon who had criticised the Guards' commander General Yahya Rahim Safavi two days earlier for allegedly threatening to suppress internal dis-

sent.

The veteran surgeon, identified as Dr. Movahedi, had also protested against a recent ruling by parliament to segregate medical care by sex.

According to the paper, one of the surgeons present at the conference who protested against the raid was beaten up and taken away. The paper said there was "no information on his fate."

Organisers later decided to close the meeting but were prevented by the assailants, who insisted on an apology, it said. Several video cameras and other pieces of equipment were broken in the ensuing stand-off, and the attackers seized the taped cassette of the event before they left the hall.

The conference resumed in the afternoon.

### JORDAN TELEVISION

PROGRAMME TWO  
15:10 ..... Mr. Bogus Show  
15:30 ..... Oliver Twist  
16:00 ..... The Album Show  
17:00 ..... Ushuata  
18:00 ..... Milner Fenwick  
18:15 Drama — Acapulco Bay  
19:00 ..... Le Journal  
19:15 ..... Eme6  
19:30 ..... News headlines  
19:35 ..... Buddies  
20:00 Doc. — Envoye Special  
20:25 ..... Glass Jungle  
20:50 ..... Kung Fu  
21:30 ..... News in English  
21:45 Football Match — European Cup Stuttgart vs. Chelsea  
23:30 Comedy — Perfect Strangers

### PRAYER TIMES

04:07 ..... Fajr  
05:35 ..... (Sunrise) Duha  
12:32 ..... Dhuhr  
16:12 ..... Asr  
19:28 ..... Maghreb  
20:56 ..... 'Isha

### CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church  
Sweifish, Tel. 5920740  
Assemblies of God Church Tel.  
4632785  
St. Joseph Church Tel.

## JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

4624590  
Terra Sancta Church Tel.  
4622366  
Anglican Church Tel.  
4624853/4624811  
St. Aftem Syrian Orthodox  
Church Tel. 771751  
Amman International Church  
Tel. 865897  
German-speaking Evangelical  
Congregation Tel. 5688404  
The Evangelical Local Church  
in Amman Tel. 811295  
Church of Jesus Christ of Latter  
Day Saints Tel. 4654932  
St. John the Baptist at De la  
Salle College Tel. 5661757  
Church of the Annunciation  
Tel. 4637440  
Greek Orthodox Church Tel.  
4646138  
Church of Presentation, Sweifish  
Tel. 5920146  
The United Catholic Church  
Tel. 4624757  
The English-Language  
Catholic Parish Tel. 4614190  
Evangelical Free Church Tel.  
892679  
The Baptist Church Tel.  
4628052  
The Armenian Catholic  
Church Tel. 771331  
The Armenian Orthodox  
Church Tel. 775261

WEATHER  
Bulletin supplied by the  
Department of Meteorology  
Relative cold weather conditions  
will prevail, skies partly  
cloudy with a chance of scattered  
showers and winds westerly  
moderate to active. In  
Aqaba, winds will be northerly  
moderate and seas calm.  
Amman ..... 11/22  
Aqaba ..... 17/31  
Deserts ..... 10/25  
Jordan Valley ..... 14/30  
Yesterday's high temperatures:  
Amman 23, Aqaba 32  
Humidity readings: Amman  
31 per cent, Aqaba 35 per  
cent.

### USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS NIGHT DUTY

Dr. Ghaleb Zawaideh ..... 4126011  
Dr. Tawfiq Qub'ain ..... 4623029  
Dr. Khalid Asfour ..... 5332600  
Dr. Bilal Al Sayid ..... 890280  
Firas pharmacy ..... 5661912  
Al Asma pharmacy ..... 4637035  
Al Salam pharmacy 4636730

Yacoub pharmacy ..... 4644945  
Shmeisani pharmacy 4637660  
Nairoukh pharmacy ..... 4623672  
Najib pharmacy ..... 5347632  
DRID:  
Dr. Fawzi Abul Hatja 252970  
Al Quds pharmacy ..... (—)  
ZARQA:  
Dr. Akram Haddad ..... 985550  
Khalifeh pharmacy ..... 985417

### EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre ..... 4637111  
Civil Defence Department 5661111  
Civil Defence Immediate Rescue ..... 4630341  
Civil Defence Emergency ..... 199  
Rescue Police 192, 4631111, 4637777  
Fire Brigade ..... 4617101  
Blood Bank ..... 775121  
Highway Police ..... 843402  
Traffic Police ..... 896390  
Public Security Dept. 4630321  
Hotel Complaints ..... 5605800  
Price Complaints ..... 5661176  
Water & Sewerage Complaints 897467  
Amman Municipality Complaints ..... 787111  
Telephone Information (directory assistance) ..... 121  
Overseas Calls ..... 010230  
Central Amman Telephone Repairs ..... 4623101  
Abdali Tel. Repairs ..... 5661101

Jordan Television ..... 773111  
Radio Jordan ..... 774111  
Water Authority ..... 5680100  
J. Electricity Authority ..... 815615  
Electric Power Co. .... 4636381  
RJ Flight Information ..... 44-53200  
Queen Alia Int. Airport ..... 44-53200

### HOSPITALS

AMMAN:  
The Arab Centre for Heart and Special Surgery ..... 5921199  
The Islamic Abdi ..... 566613/7  
Hussein Medical Centre Tel. 5858256, 5336813  
Luzmila ..... 4630195  
Khalidi Maternity ..... 4644281/6  
Akhileh Maternity ..... 464241/2  
Jabal Amman Maternity 4642362  
Malhas, J. Amman ..... 4636140  
Palestine, Shmeisani ..... 5607071  
Shmeisani Hospital ..... 5669131  
University Hospital ..... 5353444  
Al-Muasher Hospital 5667227/9  
Al-Ahli, Abdali ..... 5664164/6  
Italian, Al-Muhajreen 77101/3  
Al-Bashir ..... 775111/26  
Army, Marka ..... 891611/15  
Queen Alia Hospital 5602240/50  
Rajal Hospital ..... 5674155  
ZARQA:  
Zarqa Govt. Hospital ..... (09)983323

Zarqa National Hospital  
09:30 ..... Jeddah (RJ)  
09:45 ..... Larnaca (RJ)  
09:50 ..... Dubai, Abu Dhabi (RJ)  
15:35 ..... New York, Amsterdam (RJ)  
18:05 ..... Istanbul (RJ)  
19:05 ..... London, Rome (RJ)  
19:20 ..... Madrid, Geneva (RJ)  
19:25 ..... Frankfurt, Berlin (RJ)  
19:50 ..... Paris, Brussels (RJ)  
00:15 ..... Beirut (RJ)  
01:00 ..... Cairo (RJ)  
AQABA:  
Princess Haya Hospital  
(03)314111

### FOR THE TRAVELLER QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (44)53200 where it should always be verified. Information on other flights are supplied on phone 44 (52700) or 44(53250).

### ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights  
07:30 ..... Damascus (RJ)

09:30 ..... Jeddah (RJ)  
09:45 ..... Larnaca (RJ)  
09:50 ..... Dubai, Abu Dhabi (RJ)  
15:35 ..... New York, Amsterdam (RJ)  
18:05 ..... Istanbul (RJ)  
19:05 ..... London, Rome (RJ)  
19:20 ..... Madrid, Geneva (RJ)  
19:25 ..... Frankfurt, Berlin (RJ)  
19:50 ..... Paris, Brussels (RJ)  
00:15 ..... Beirut (RJ)  
01:00 ..... Cairo (RJ)

### Other Flights

10:30 ..... Cairo (MS)  
11:00 ..... Sanaa, Hudaidah (TY)  
11:30 ..... Sanaa, Kuwait (KU)  
12:30 ..... Jeddah (SV)  
14:10 ..... Tunis (TU)  
14:10 ..... Bahrain (GF)  
15:05 ..... Vienna (OS)  
16:30 ..... Algiers (AH)  
18:35 ..... Karachi, Abu Dhabi (PK)  
19:05 ..... Frankfurt (LH)  
21:10 ..... Beirut (ME)  
23:20 ..... Istanbul (TK)  
23:20 ..... Amsterdam (KL)  
23:45 ..... Athens, Beirut (OA)  
00:15 ..... London (BA)

06:30 ..... Larnaca (RJ)  
08:50 ..... Amsterdam, New York (RJ)  
11:40 ..... Rome, London (RJ)  
12:45 ..... Istanbul (RJ)  
20:10 ..... Colombo (RJ)  
20:35 ..... Beirut (RJ)  
21:00 ..... New Delhi (RJ)  
21:10 ..... Cairo (RJ)  
21:10 ..... Riyadh, Dhahran (RJ)  
21:20 ..... Bombay (RJ)  
21:25 ..... Calcutta, Bangkok (RJ)  
22:15 ..... Dubai, Muscat (RJ)  
23:40 ..... Sanaa (RJ)  
02:59 ..... Doha, Bahrain (RJ)

### Other Flights

06:35 ..... Larnaca (CY)  
07:30 ..... Paris (AF)  
08:45 ..... Beirut (ME)  
09:20 ..... London (BA)  
11:30 ..... Cairo (MS)  
11:30 ..... Ta'iz, Sanaa (TY)  
12:45 ..... Kuwait (KU)  
14:00 ..... Jeddah (SV)  
15:00 ..... Bahrain, Muscat (GF)  
15:10 ..... Tunis (TU)  
15:30 ..... Vienna (OS)  
17:20 ..... Sharjah (AH)  
20:30 ..... Abu Dhabi, Karachi (PK)  
00:40 ..... Damascus, Amsterdam (KL)  
04:00 ..... Beirut, Athens (OA)

### Royal Wings (RW)

08:00 ..... Aqaba (from Marka Airport (RW))  
17:30 ..... Tel Aviv (from Marka Airport) (RW)  
22:50 ..... Aqaba (from QAIA) (RW)

## Home

## King, Queen Survivors

AMMAN — King Hussein and Queen Alia survived a terror attack on their plane as it landed at the Queen Alia International Airport on Tuesday. The royal couple were unharmed after a bomb exploded near the aircraft as it taxied on the runway. The attack, which occurred at 10:30 a.m., was the second in a series of attempts on the royal couple's lives. The first attempt was on May 12, when a car bomb exploded near the royal residence in Amman. The king and queen were unharmed in that attack as well.

## Spanish guitarist dazzles with performance marking artist's birthday

By Jean-Claude Elias  
The Spanish guitarist, Manuel de Falla, gave a brilliant performance at the Jordanian National Theatre on Tuesday, marking the 100th anniversary of his birth. The performance was a highlight of the festival, with the audience captivated by his virtuosity.

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## Arab exam

By Al  
The Arab exam, a test of Arabic language proficiency, was held in Amman on Tuesday. The exam was attended by students from various schools and universities in the city.

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# King, Queen meet with Landmine Survivors Network executive director

AMMAN (J.T.) — His Majesty King Hussein briefly joined Her Majesty Queen Noor's Monday meeting with the executive director of Landmine Survivors Network (LSN), Jerry White, at Bab Al Salam, according to a press release.

They discussed LSN's plan to hold its first international conference, entitled "Landmine Injury and Rehabilitation in the Middle East," dedicated to landmine victim assistance in Amman. According to Mr. White, Jordan's "reputation as an emerging medical centre of excellence and its leadership in the Middle East for its care for the disabled make it an ideal place to host such a conference."

King Hussein said "Jordan is taking measures to rid its border areas of landmines and we are seeking international help to speed up the process. We want to get rid of landmines once and for all and we also want to engage in a regional dialogue."

Queen Noor said Jordan supports all humanitarian efforts aimed at achieving a total ban on landmines and at providing care for those who have been disabled. She noted that wars in the Middle East have left millions of landmines that continue to maim and kill civilians and that specialists believe that there are still around 280,000 landmines buried in Jordan as a result of previous wars.

The president of the Jordan National Red Crescent Society, Mohammad Hadid, said the society is working on a

project to establish a centre for artificial limbs, training and rehabilitation of landmine survivors and to promote awareness of landmines and the needs of survivors in Jordan and the Middle East, the statement said.

Jordan is among the few countries that have declared that they do not currently export anti-personnel landmines and have no intentions of doing so in the future. The 1997 Ottawa treaty proposed an international ban on the production, stockpile and use of anti-personnel landmines. Although many of the Middle Eastern countries attended the Ottawa Conference, few signed the treaty.

Founded in 1997, the Landmine Survivors Network (LSN) works to assist mine

victims and their families to recover, heal and resume their role as participating and contributing members in their communities. LSN's programmes are designed to promote comprehensive rehabilitation through an integrated system of peer counselling, sports and social and economic integration.

According to Mr. White, there are an "estimated 300,000 survivors worldwide, mostly civilians, including tens of thousands of women and children injured through no fault of their own." Mr. White lost his leg to a landmine 14 years ago.

Kamel Sa'adi, a Jordanian landmine survivor and trained prosthetist who has been working closely with the LSN, also attended the meeting.

# Israelis to blame for delay in Washington summit — Abbas

AMMAN (Petra) — Mahmoud Abbas, secretary general of the Palestine Liberation Organisation's executive committee, Tuesday denounced Israel's postponement of the Washington meeting scheduled for Monday as a bid to obstruct the peace process.

"The Israeli side was the reason behind the delay in convening the Washington summit," said Mr. Abbas. "From the start the Palestinian National Authority accepted the American initiative but it was the Israelis who rejected it... so the present differences do not exist between us and the Israelis but rather between the Americans and the Israelis," said Mr. Abbas following a meeting with Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali.

Mr. Abbas and Dr. Majali reviewed the latest developments in the Middle East peace process, including the London meetings and the series of meetings U.S. envoy Dennis Ross held with Palestinian leaders.

Mr. Abbas told reporters that he and the prime minister discussed issues of common concern and exchanged views regarding developments in the peace process.

Asked about a reported Israeli proposal for redeploying Israeli troops from 15 per cent of the West Bank in stages, Mr. Abbas said: "We were not presented with this

proposal either through formal or unofficial channels, because it is the Americans who had proposed the 13 per cent withdrawal. So far, nothing has changed."

Asked about Palestine's stand vis-à-vis an Arab summit meeting, Mr. Abbas said "The Palestinians are for a summit meeting whether the current efforts in the peace process succeed or not, because regular summits are required by Arab states to discuss Arab issues."

On his expectations of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's meeting with U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright in Washington on Wednesday,

Mr. Abbas said: "We do not know whether the U.S. administration will put pressure on the Israeli prime minister or not, but so far the U.S. has failed to persuade him to accept its proposals."

At the meeting, which was attended by Palestinian Ambassador to Jordan Omar Khuri, Dr. Majali reiterated Jordan's unwavering support for the Palestinian people and leadership in their quest to regain their legitimate rights on their national soil.

Dr. Majali said Jordan will support any efforts to give momentum to the peace process and bring about a just and comprehensive peace.

# Spanish guitarist dazzles with performance marking artist's birthday

By Jean-Claude Elias  
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Spanish guitar virtuoso Rafael Serrallet delighted the audience that went to listen to him Sunday at a recital presented by Instituto Cervantes as part of the celebrations marking the centenary of the birth of Federico Garcia Lorca. One of Spain's most celebrated and beloved artists.

Serrallet played a very eclectic programme of classical guitar, far from the pieces that are well known to the public. He included two pieces — "El Amor de Don Perlimpin" and "Nana de Sevilla" — by Lorca, who was a multi-talented artist, mainly known for his writing and his poems but who also composed fine music and produced creative drawings.

Serrallet sailed with perfect ease through pieces which, for the connoisseur at least, have hidden technical difficulties. His style is characterised by a very soft, musical touch. In one of the opening numbers, the guitarist managed to create superb harmonies.

Serrallet played more than 17 pieces, with some of the most beautiful being Fandango by Torroba, Pavana Triste by Palacios and Homage by Manuel de Falla.

Before the end of the performance and between two guitar numbers, the audience was treated to five short poems by Lorca. Although they were read in Spanish, "the music of the words," as Serrallet explained, was evocative enough to create the right atmosphere for even those who could not understand the language.

Except for a photographer who insisted on operating his noisy camera through half of the concert and the unwanted, unmusical accompaniment of someone banging repeatedly on the hall's rear doors, the event was very successful. Serrallet had the good idea to play, as an encore, the famous "Danza del Molinero" to an audience who was obviously happy to hear a familiar piece.



PRINCESS ALIA OPENS CONFERENCE: HRH Princess Alia, flanked by Jordan University President Sa'd Hijazi and Jordanian Vets Association President Husam Amoudi, opens a two-day scientific conference at the Jordan University for Science and Technology. Participants will discuss 19 working papers on the use and abuse of veterinary drugs, animal vaccination programmes and other topics related to horses and laboratories. Taking part in the conference are representatives of Jordan, Egypt, Tunisia, Sudan, Lebanon and Iraq, and Jordanian universities and scientific institutions (Petra photo)

# Arab-German media conference examines means of enhancing interaction

By Alia Shukri Hamzeh  
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — A two-day Arab-German media dialogue started Tuesday with special emphasis on new ways of overcoming obstacles hindering interaction, developing and reinforcing independent Arab media and enhancing German coverage in the Middle East.

Speaking at the opening ceremony of the conference, organised by the Stuttgart-based German Institute of Foreign Relations, German Ambassador Peter Mende said Germany and Arab countries share very good relations even though their cultures, education and interests differ.

"Relations between countries need not solely depend on trade relations but rather finding common grounds and overcoming differences," he added.

Udo Steinbach, representative of the Deutsches Orient-Institut in Hamburg, noted that the media plays a major role in societies, with its coverage of human rights and democracy and the political and non-political effects it has on general policy-making. "Governments no longer set policies alone, media takes a big part in setting these policies nowadays," he said.

Dr. Steinbach spoke on the need for Europe and the Arab World to overcome cultural differences as well as the need for Arab unity in the face of globalisation.

becoming a superpower after it has united... this is the biggest lesson to be learned, and if Arabs do not unite they will stand to lose in the face of a united Europe and America."

The first paper delivered at the conference was under the theme of "human rights and women's rights: law and legal protection on the path to democracy," and was delivered by Hamed Abu Zayd, an Egyptian professor from Leiden University in Holland and Gernot Rotter, a German professor from the University of Hamburg.

In his paper, Dr. Abu Zayd said that while the International Convention of Human Rights was based on the struggle against oppression and discrimination, its actual activation has fallen short.

"Cultural, social and sexual discrimination is evident in all societies, especially those of the First World countries, who practice all sorts of humiliating actions until the concept of 'human' is doubted," he said.

Such a disparity in ethics and values is embodied in the Arab World in general and the Western world in terms of ethnic and cultural group relations on the one hand and the Western world's relationship with the Arab and Islamic worlds on the other, he said.

Speaking from a European perspective, Mr. Rotter said there is a constant violation of human rights in the Arab World, primarily freedom of

expression, which he said is constantly supervised and censored.

Democratic improvement is hindered by the lack of separation between politics and religion, he added.

During today's session, papers examining problems facing Arab-German and European relations and Islam and the West will be discussed.

According to a statement from the German embassy, the first Arab-German Dialogue was held in the German city of Hamburg in 1997 and was dedicated to discussing media policies, stereotyping and the lack of information and coverage which has negatively affected Arabs' perspective of the West and Europe.

"The issue of human rights is closely linked to freedom of expression. Therefore, reinforcing and developing independent Arab media and capable German coverage in the Middle East is one of the most important goals of the joint Arab-German dialogue," the statement said.

Media specialists from Jordan, Egypt, Qatar, Kuwait, Yemen, Morocco, Lebanon, Bahrain, Algeria, Oman, Saudi Arabia, and representatives of the Palestinian National Authority are participating in his year's conference. Representing the German side are government media officials and senior journalists.

# Classical guitarist Azkoul delivers 'first-class' performance

By Jean-Claude Elias  
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Classical guitarist Jad Azkoul's performance at the American Center on Monday was one of the finest concerts ever presented in Amman, with the musician more than confirming his credentials as a great guitarist, with all that the term implies.

From the very first notes of Turegga's "Adelita" to the last chord of the popular "Recuerdos de la Alhambra," which he played as an encore, Azkoul's instrument vibrated with the most ear-pleasing sound. He played clear, detached bass lines blended with bright melodic phrases, ornamented with subtle harmonics. All the pieces of the programme, without exception, were magnificently played: the "Preludes No. 1, 3 and 5" by Villa-Lobos, "We've got polyrhythm" by Schwartz, "Lullaby" and "Sunburst" by York, and the superb "Cadiz," "Granada" and "Asturias" by Albeniz, transcribed from the piano for the guitar by Azkoul himself.

Jad Azkoul cares about one essential aspect of music: the intrinsic beauty of its sound. The result is absolute musicality. Few guitarists are able to reach such levels in total quality.

Azkoul doesn't try to impress the audience with lightning-fast passages for example. Instead of flashy gimmicks, the marvellous tones he manages to obtain from his instrument — a concert guitar made by George Lowden in Northern Ireland — leave a deep and lasting impression on the listener. Only legends like Narciso Yepes, Julian Bream or Alexandre Lagoya can achieve such a tour de force.

A genuine musician cannot be just an instrumentalist. Azkoul proves it by being a great communicator too. Whether introducing the pieces he plays or commenting on certain aspects of his art, he immediately establishes a magical link with his audience. He does it with elegance, taste, an obvious sense of humour and mystery that only experience can bring.

Guitar music lovers in Amman are looking forward to the second concert Azkoul will present today, this time with Jordanian oud player Sakher Hanar.

# Political parties, unions mark 50th anniversary of nakbeh

By Francesca Ciriaci  
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Thirteen opposition parties and the 80,000-strong Union of Professional Associations are staging cultural and artistic events as well as political debates to mark the 50th anniversary of the British-mandate Palestine.

The initiatives, announced at a press conference late last month, follow the government's ban on a public rally planned for April 30 which was supposed to inaugurate the series of commemorative events.

Arabs mark the 50th anniversary of the "nakbeh," or catastrophe, on May 14, the date of the beginning of the first Arab-Israeli conflict.

The climax of the programme is expected to be a public rally at the headquarters of the Union of Professional Associations.

in Shmeisani, on Friday evening, said Deputy Mohammad Ouran (Taflehi), head of the Higher Committee for Coordination Among the Opposition Parties.

Dr. Ouran, who is also the secretary general of the left-leaning Arab Land Party, added that the rally will be preceded by the inauguration of the new headquarters of the Society Against Zionism and Racism in Jabal Al Nuzha earlier in the afternoon.

The society is headed by outspoken opposition figure Leith Shbeilat, who was sentenced yesterday to a nine-month prison term for instigating riots.

In a telephone interview on Tuesday, Dr. Ouran told the Jordan Times that the opposition parties have decided to postpone a one-day march from Amman to Karameh, initially planned for this weekend, to June 5.

Dr. Ouran stressed that

the event was rescheduled because it overlapped with other initiatives and that there were no political reasons behind the postponement.

The choice of Karameh, opposition leaders said, was symbolic, as the small town in the Jordan Valley witnessed the victory of the Jordanian army and Palestinian fedayeen groups against raiding Israeli forces on March 21, 1968.

Among other joint initiatives to mark the 50th anniversary of the nakbeh throughout the Kingdom, the 38,000-strong Jordan Engineers Association and Jordan Writers Association are hosting a one-week programme, which will close on May 16.

The programme includes art, clothing, handicrafts and book exhibitions, dramas, as well as lectures to be delivered by prominent politicians.

# National health plan is country's main challenge — minister

GENEVA (Petra) — The formulation of a national health plan to provide medical services to all Jordanian citizens is the main challenge facing the Kingdom at present, according to Minister of Health and Medical Care Ashraf Kurdi.

In an address to the 51st meeting of the World Health Organisation (WHO) in Geneva, the minister said that despite the steady improvement in Jordan's health services, the country still faces major challenges including population growth and the increasing demands on public health services.

Other challenges include creating a health academy, establishing a central laboratory to control the quality of medical services and drawing up policies on advanced training for personnel involved in the health field, said Dr. Kurdi.

The WHO observes the 50th anniversary of its founding on May 14, and the occasion calls for a world-wide review of achievements in health fields, he added.

Among the WHO's achievements, Dr. Kurdi said, are the elimination of smallpox in 1980 and the struggle to ensure health for all by the year 2000.

In Jordan, the concerned authorities are exerting relentless efforts to promote the standards of health services to meet future requirements, Dr. Kurdi said.

The current WHO session, which ends this week, is covering world health issues, drug manufacturing, prevention of contagious diseases, as well as the general health condition of the Arab population in the occupied Arab regions. Palestine's request to become a WHO member state and a special session to mark the 50th anniversary of WHO's founding.

# Columnist criticises 'interference' in upcoming press association elections

By Alia Shukri Hamzeh  
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — In the run-up to the July elections for the president and council of the Jordan Press Association (JPA), one of the candidates and Press and Publications Department (PPD) chief Bilal Tal had a head-on confrontation this week, promising a heated campaign.

Criticising what he described as meddling in the affairs of the JPA, columnist Bassem Sakijha wrote in Al Dustour on Monday that Mr. Tal is interfering in the upcoming elections by urging journalists to vote for his preferred candidate.

He said Mr. Tal should act within his capacity as a government representative and deal with printed matter and not with journalists and the association.

Mr. Sakijha ran in the JPA previous elections in 1996 and lost.

So far only two candidates have announced that they are running for president in the July elections: Mr. Sakijha and incumbent JPA President Seif Sharif.

Sources have also indicated that the daily Al Rai plans to field a candidate.

According to many, the early nomination of Mr. Sharif has lit the fuse of what is expected to be a tight election battle.

In his column, Mr. Sakijha also accused Mr. Tal of campaigning and forming blocs in order to ensure that his candidate wins.

"This is an unprecedented and unacceptable occurrence," he said. "The PPD director should not be allowed to interfere in the JPA's elections, even if he was a former colleague."

Mr. Tal responded by informing that he was "still a member of the JPA."

He also expressed sur-

prise at what he described as Mr. Sakijha's "lack of knowledge" of the JPA's law.

Mr. Tal added that even though he is a government representative, he can be involved in the elections. "I do not consider working for the government a disgrace, rather an honour."

He denied campaigning or forming blocs, but said he has no scruples about exercising his rights. "I will go to the poll and elect whom I think is suitable."

Mr. Sakijha also blamed Mr. Tal for harming Jordan's image abroad by banning the entry of newspapers and denying the public access to the Internet. "Jordan topped the list of countries considered as restrictive to freedom of expression," he said.

Mr. Tal responded that the accusation was "nau-seating."

# what's going on

- AMERICAN ARTS FESTIVAL
- \* Guitar and oud concert "East Meets West" by Jad Askoul and Sakher Hanar at the American Center, Abdoun at 7:00 p.m.
- PIANO RECITAL
- \* Piano recital by 10-year-old Jordanian pianist Karim Saeed at the Royal Cultural Centre at 8:00 p.m.
- SPRING FAIR
- \* Spring collection of ceramic items and rugs at Beit Al-Bawadi showroom, Abdoun (Tel. 5925841/5930070), until May 24.
- ART SALE
- \* Sale of personal oil paintings of artist Mohammad Al Hadidi (at his residence), Dahiyyat Al Rashid, near Al Dawahi Hotel (Tel. 5154567).

# Al Quds Al Arabi barred from entry

AMMAN (AFP) — The Press and Publications Department (PPD) has banned a London-based Arabic newspaper from entering the country, the paper's Jordan correspondent said Tuesday.

Bassam Badarin told Agence France Presse (AFP) that Al Quds Al Arabi in London had received a letter to this effect as had the paper's

distributor in Jordan.

He added that in the last four months the department has confiscated 37 issues of the paper, which sells between 300 and 400 copies a day in Jordan, over articles considered harmful to Jordan.

PPD Director Bilal Tal said the department came to its decision "after making every attempt to open dialogue with the paper's

Amman bureau" to ensure their commitment to "principles of professionalism, objectivity and neutrality."

Mr. Tal told AFP that Al Quds Al Arabi's Amman bureau "persisted in publishing reports and analyses that went against the simplest rules of professional conduct and objectivity."



## Britain says NATO key to calming Kosovo

RHODES, Greece (R) — British Defence Secretary George Robertson said Tuesday that the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) should spearhead efforts to contain the violence in Kosovo because this would bring together Europe, Russia and the United States.

In an interview with Reuters, Mr. Robertson also said the Western European Union (WEU) defence grouping had a role to play in the crisis in the Serbian province but that this likely would be limited to training of border police in neighbouring Albania.

He said WEU foreign and defence ministers, meeting on the Greek island of Rhodes, had concluded that their grouping would be most effective if it worked alongside North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO).

"The general view is that NATO has the military capability, is doing the assessment exercise at the moment and that it will bring the Americans with it and an interface with the Russians," he said in the interview conducted on Rhodes.

Russia has a special working relationship with the NATO. NATO ambassadors will

meet at the alliance's Brussels headquarters Wednesday to discuss a series of options for containing the violence in Kosovo, where Serbian forces and ethnic Albanian separatists have been clashing.

Ministers at the Rhodes meeting said that the options would include creating a no-flight zone, putting observers into Kosovo and creating a military border patrol on Albania's frontier with Kosovo.

Mr. Robertson acknowledged that the latter would be an extremely difficult undertaking.

"The border between Albania and Kosovo is very, very mountainous and therefore very difficult to police," he said.

The WEU, seen by some as a defence arm for the European Union, has been seeking a role. It has officially been given the task of providing peacekeeping and humanitarian aid support in situations where NATO and the United States do not want to go.

Mr. Robertson said the WEU had only just begun to develop in this role and there was a "quiet resolution" among the group's members that it should have some mission con-

cerning Kosovo as long as it was alongside NATO.

He said the WEU would expand its existing training programme for the Albanian police, with an emphasis on border patrols.

WEU military planners would also start working with their NATO counterparts at Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE) in Mons, Belgium, he said.

With 28 countries involved in the WEU — 10 full members and 18 observers or associates — the organisation is also a powerful vehicle for exerting political pressure on Belgrade, Mr. Robertson added.

Britain has traditionally been among the least fervent supporters of the WEU, believing firmly that NATO is the key to European security and eschewing European integration in general.

Mr. Robertson confirmed that Britain had opposed at the meeting Monday a proposal by Belgium to set up a group of "wise men" to look into ways of beefing up the WEU.

"We take the view that something (like this) side-lines policy when what is needed is action. Do we really need another in depth study?"



Ethnic Albanian leader Ibrahim Rugova (left) leads the way to U.S. mediators Richard Holbrooke (right) and Robert Gelbard (centre) after their talks on the Kosovo crisis in Pristina (Reuters photo)

## Major divisions remain between Kosovo leaders, Belgrade

PRISTINA, Yugoslavia (AFP) — U.S. special envoys

Richard Holbrooke and Robert Gelbard held fresh talks Tuesday with Kosovo Albanian leader Ibrahim Rugova, a day after Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic

rebuffed their bid for foreign mediation of the growing crisis in Kosovo.

Mr. Holbrooke said after the meeting with Mr. Rugova that "the distance between the two sides still remains very substantial."

He said the talks with Mr. Rugova were "very useful," and added that they would hold another meeting with Mr. Milosevic later Tuesday.

"We are as always impressed by Dr. Rugova's commitment to peaceful non-violent solution of the problem," said Mr. Holbrooke.

"We will have nothing further to say except to emphasise that the distance between the two sides still remains very substantial," he concluded.

The two envoys have held two four-hour sessions of talks with the Yugoslav president since Saturday.

They last met with Mr. Rugova in the Kosovo capital Sunday. That meeting had been followed by talks with Albanian leaders in Tirana.

Albanian leaders Tuesday rejected for the 13th time in two months an invitation from the Serbian authorities to hold talks. Until Belgrade agrees to the presence of an international mediator

they will not come to the negotiating table, they say.

The talks had been offered by Serbian Prime Minister Ratko Markovic to discuss a provisional decision on the status of Kosovo and a draft plan for local self-government.

After Sunday's talks, Mr. Milosevic decried external pressure being brought to bear on what he described as an internal matter for his country, according to a report by the official Tanjug news agency.

Kosovo's mainly ethnic-Albanian population is seeking greater independence from Belgrade. Mr. Milosevic revoked the autonomy of the southern Serbian province in 1989 when he was Yugoslav Communist Party leader.

A Serbian crackdown on Kosovo province since March has left some 100 people dead.

Mr. Milosevic has steadfastly refused any foreign mediation despite mounting concern by international organisations that a civil war could be developing in the province.

Two Albanians were killed in Pristina early Tuesday, one of whom died in a shoot-out with Serbian police. The body of the other man was found riddled with bullets in a house, but the circumstances of his death were unclear, the Albanian Human Rights Committee said.

An independent radio station in Belgrade, B-52, reported that one person died in an attack against Serbian police in Pristina.

## AI warns of violence against Argentine reporters

BUENOS AIRES (AFP) — Violence against

Argentine reporters has intensified over the past two years, the Human Rights group Amnesty International said in a report issued here.

The report, issued late Monday, states that attacks on members of the news media "put freedom of expression at great risk."

The Amnesty report looks at 33 cases of journalists and their families who were attacked or threatened since the high-profile murder of photojournalist Jose Luis Cabezas in January 1997.

Cabezas had been documenting the links between organised

crime, politicians and the police.

"The current climate of intimidation can lead to self-censorship, which could in turn have a considerable effect on the protection of human rights in Argentina," Amnesty representatives Federico Andreu and Virginia Schoppe told reporters.

The Argentine Reporters Union has documented more than 113 threats against journalists in the last years, Mr. Andreu and Mr. Schoppe said.

Most alarming is that there have been no proper investigations into any of the threats against the press, the Amnesty representatives noted.

## Yeltsin says nuclear weapons have no future

MOSCOW (AFP) — Russian President Boris Yeltsin said Tuesday that nuclear weapons had no future and would ultimately be eradicated altogether.

In a question-and-answer session carried live on the Internet, Mr. Yeltsin said: "The future does not belong to nuclear weapons. In the final analysis we will eliminate nuclear weapons."

Mr. Yeltsin said earlier Tuesday that pushing the much-delayed START II nuclear disarmament treaty through a reluctant Russian parliament remained a top priority for the country.

"We put forward an initiative to reduce nuclear weapons," Mr. Yeltsin said in his Internet chat. "Then we signed a treaty with (U.S. President) Bill Clinton to reduce strategic nuclear weapons. I think that in the very near future this treaty will be ratified."

"It will provide for a further reduction in strategic nuclear weapons by approximately two to three times," he added. "We not only support but we put forward this initiative and we try to pull others into it too. We are trying to push our parliament."

START II, which provides for a two-thirds reduction in nuclear arsenals, was ratified by the U.S. Senate in January 1996, but has been blocked by opposition deputies in the Duma, who say the accord puts Moscow at a disadvantage.

The treaty would leave Russia with 3,000 warheads by 2003, while the United States would be allowed to keep 3,500 nuclear warheads.

Mr. Yeltsin is expected to discuss disarmament issues later this week with President Clinton on the sidelines of a G8 summit in Birmingham, England.

## Movie star takes lead role in Philippine vote count

MANILA (AFP) — Former movie star Joseph Estrada took a crushing lead Tuesday in major exit polls and early ballot counts in the race for the Philippine presidency.

Mr. Estrada, the vice president and opposition leader, had about one third of the votes and was far ahead of his nearest rival, House Speaker Jose de Venecia.

"I hope they will be gentlemen enough to see the light and be a good sport and they should concede as early as possible," Mr. Estrada said of his opponents. Mr. de Venecia rejected the polls.

With just 0.6 per cent of Monday's ballots counted, Mr. Estrada had 56,303

votes, or 30.6 per cent of the total, according to the National Citizens' Movement for Free Elections.

The body has been accredited to conduct a "quick count" expected to take about two weeks but the first results are unreliable. It placed Mr. de Venecia fifth with just 18,005, or 9.8 per cent.

The respected pollster Social Weather Stations released its exit poll of 4,800 people from all regions which it said had a margin of error of less than 1.5 per cent.

It gave Mr. Estrada 38.7 per cent and Mr. de Venecia 16.5 per cent.

The poll agreed with other major surveys.

Mr. Estrada garnered 34.6 per cent of the vote according to an exit poll of 41,840 voters conducted around the country by DZRH radio station with Channel Nine television.

Mr. de Venecia had 16.8 per cent, it said, adding that the margin of error was two to three per cent.

An exit poll by AMA Computer College of 7,763 voters gave Mr. Estrada 30 per cent and Mr. de Venecia 17 per cent. It forecast Mr. Estrada's share would rise as data from northern areas rolled in.

However the ruling Lakas (Strength) party, citing an exit poll taken by a group it commissioned, said Mr. de Venecia led Mr. Estrada 27 per cent to 26 per cent.

## Former nurse hid medication for dozens of patients

DALLAS (AP) — A former nurse said she stashed the medication intended for dozens of patients in his locker when he got too busy to administer the drugs.

Three of the nurse's patients who did not receive their medication have died, and prosecutors are trying to determine whether their deaths had anything to do with the withheld prescriptions.

St. Paul Medical Centre discovered the breach in November — 10 months after David Mark Anthony, 29, was fired for reasons unrelated to patient care,

hospital spokeswoman Ann Harper said.

Anthony's locker was opened, and administrators found dozens of plastic bags containing intravenous medicine with patients' names on the labels, she said.

Ms. Harper said hospital officials turned over the information to the district attorney's office in February after an internal investigation confirmed that 74 patients had not received their prescribed medication.

Anthony was employed at the hospital from May 1991

until January 1997 and worked in several areas of the hospital, including its cardiac care unit, Ms. Harper said.

Anthony said he failed to give medication 157 times. He said his actions went undetected because he signed each patient's chart to indicate that the medication had been administered.

"I would never intentionally hurt anyone, certainly not the patients," Anthony said. He said there was not enough time to give all of the medication to some patients. "So I just didn't do it."

## Italy working on mudslide evacuation plan

SARNO, Italy (AP) — With rain in the forecast, Italy's top civil defence officials went to work Tuesday on an evacuation plan for the region where at least 135 people died last week in mudslides.

"There was no plan the first time," said civil defence spokesman Paolo Ferneti. "To be caught without one a second time would be criminal."

He said a helicopter with an ultra-sensitive camera was flying over Mount Sarno photographing the

slide area. The pictures will be used by geologists to estimate where any new danger lies.

Scientists are working on an early-warning system using sensors placed along the mountain's slopes. They are also studying ways to divert future slides before they reach any of the six towns at Mount Sarno's base.

Civil protection officials said the plan should be finished in a few days.

More than 3,000 rescue workers, meanwhile, continued digging through layers of sun-baked mud and debris in search of the about 150 people still missing. A team of psychiatrists was in the area counselling survivors.

Residents of the hard-hit region in southern Italy have blasted the government for not doing enough to avert last week's tragedy.

Mr. Ferneti said Tuesday that even if there had been an evacuation plan, it might not have saved many lives because the slides were so "sudden and unexpected."

## Chinese schoolboy commits suicide after being sent home

BEIJING (AFP) — A 12-year-old Chinese schoolboy hanged himself after being sent home from school for failing to finish his homework, the official Xinhua news agency said Tuesday.

Li Xingui, a student at Urungui in the northwestern region of Xinjiang, was sent home on the morning of May 7 and told to copy lessons from his Chinese textbooks for failing to finish his homework.

The agency quoted the China Youth Daily as saying the boy cried and pleaded with his teacher, who asked one of his classmates to call his father. The father was asked to take his son home.

Mr. Li was said to be unruly and was often criticised by teachers for his poor classroom performance, the newspaper said.

The official agency said China's education system

had come under fire in recent years for putting unreasonable emphasis on exam results, to the detriment of developing personal qualities and cultivated qualities.

It said several suicides and a general outcry prompted the education ministry to reform the primary and middle school curricula and the university entrance examination system.

## China urges Taiwan to boost ties amid exercises

BEIJING (R) — China Tuesday urged Taiwan to work on boosting ties as the island held a second day of large-scale military exercises.

Monday, Taiwan kicked off three days of manoeuvres but played down potentially provocative earlier statements that they were designed to thwart an invasion by China.

Asked to comment on the exercises, Chinese foreign ministry spokesman Zhu Bangzao said Taiwan should work on improving cross-strait relations.

We hope relevant authorities in Taiwan will do more that is beneficial to improving cross-strait relationship and exchanges and not the opposite, Mr. Zhu told a news briefing. He made no further comment on the

issue.

The main focus of Taiwan's manoeuvres, involving all three armed services and reserve forces along its relatively undeveloped eastern coast, would be air and sea defence and anti-landing training, according to Taiwan's defence ministry.

China, with its three million-strong People's Liberation Army, has threatened to invade if the nationalist-ruled island abandoned its avowed goal of reunification with mainland China and declared independence.

Beijing has viewed Taiwan as a renegade province since the Communists won a civil war on the mainland and drove the defeated nationalists onto the island in 1949.

## Macau court quizzes alleged gang boss

MACAU (AP) — Toting assault rifles, about 20 police officers in bullet-proof vests delivered a reputed crime boss to a court where he was questioned for about four hours Tuesday.

Wan Kuok-Koi, known as "Broken Tooth" Koi, an alleged leader of Macau's biggest triad or Chinese gang, was later returned to his jail cell in this Portuguese enclave.

He will stand trial for criminal association. He was detained earlier this month after a bomb destroyed the car of Macau's director of criminal investigation.

The court reportedly questioned Mr. Wan about his alleged connections with triads, but did not release a statement.

Crime, believed related to triad activity, has spiralled in Macau in recent months.

Three government employees have been shot dead in broad daylight in assassination-style killings since March. The victims included the government's No. 3 gambling inspector.

Macau, a Portuguese-administered territory of

just 21-square-kilometres in south China near Hong Kong, derives about half of its revenue from gambling.

The violence has grown increasingly public as triads fight over shrinking profits at the fringes of the business, hit by Asia's economic downturn.

Unknown assailants have firebombed vehicles across the territory in three of the past four nights. No one was injured in the attacks.

Police arrested 10 people following a raid on an apartment near the border with China after the most recent arson attacks Monday.

Police said they seized two homemade bombs, cans of gasoline and empty bottles that were to be used for more Molotov cocktail bombs.

Macau returns to Chinese rule on Dec. 20, 1999. According to a China-backed Hong Kong newspaper, a senior Chinese official last week called on members of a Beijing-appointed committee to handle Macau's transition to come up with measures to deal with the violence.

## Wounded journalist appeals to colleagues not to be silenced

SOFIA, Bulgaria (AP) — A top crime reporter badly wounded in a sulphuric acid attack appealed from his hospital bed Tuesday to fellow journalists not to be

silenced.

"Colleagues, for us there is no other way," Anna Zarkova said in the appeal, apparently taped by a relative in hospital — where Ms. Zarkova is under police guard — and broadcast on private Radio Darik.

"If they don't splash acid in your face as a journalist, tomorrow they will kill you on the street as a citizen. That's how crime escalates in this country."

Journalists across the mainstream political spectrum vowed not to be silenced by the attack, which may have cost Ms. Zarkova sight in her left eye.

The 40-year-old crime reporter, married with two children, stood at a Sofia bus stop Monday morning when an unknown assailant hurled acid at her.

Chief Tsvetan Markov said it will be two more days before doctors can tell if she loses sight in the eye.

Ms. Zarkova has three times won a national award for investigative journalism for stories exposing organised crime and corruption in the biggest selling Trud daily. She and her family and colleagues repeatedly have been threatened.

"Although this attack was against Anna, it was an attack against all her colleagues," said Trud Editor-in-Chief Toshko Toshov. "Someone wants to seal our lips. But we won't stop speaking."

He called the attack "part of the war against media and freedom of speech" in Bulgaria, where successive governments after the 1989 overthrow of Communism ignored — or even colluded with — the rise of organised crime.

"Attacking journalists is a terrorist act against freedom," commented Trud's biggest rival, the 24 Hours daily.

Earlier this year, a hand-made bomb exploded outside Trud's offices in downtown Sofia, injuring nobody.

## 150 junta remnants killed in Sierra Leone assault

FREETOWN, Africa — Sierra Leone's new government

has announced the killing of 150 remnants of the former

junta in a military assault

on the remnants of the

former junta in Sierra

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## 150 junta remnants killed in Sierra Leone assault

FREETOWN (AFP) — Some 150 junta remnants were killed when Nigerian intervention forces and loyalist militia fighters staged a surprise assault on two towns in the extreme east of the country, an independent radio station reported Tuesday.

The assault took place in the early hours of Monday in Koidu, 320 kilometres east of Freetown and Buedu, 20 kilometres to the south, according to Manakhe radio, broadcasting from the northern town of Makeni.

The intervention force, known as ECOMOG, which advanced from the Guinean border, also captured 30 supporters of the junta it toppled in February, the radio said.

Koidu and Buedu are in the Kailahun district, long a stronghold of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF), a rebel group which, having waged a devastating civil war since 1991, rallied to the junta shortly after junior army officers seized power in May 1997.

According to witnesses quoted in the radio report, the assault came as the junta supporters were "merely making" in nightclubs they had erected.

The incident was one of the worst defeats suffered by forces of the ousted regime since ECOMOG flushed it from Freetown in February, paving the way for the return of the exiled elected president, Ahmad Tejan Kabbah, in March.

Since then, ECOMOG, working with civil defence forces such as Kamajor traditional hunters, has taken control of many towns in Sierra Leone.

In response, the junta supporters and their rebel allies have taken to terrorising the rural civilian population and the impoverished country's hospitals have been filling up with victims of crude amputations of hands, feet and ears.

ECOMOG authorities have repeatedly stressed they intend to rid Sierra Leone of all rebels and junta remnants.

ECOMOG's military strength has been boosted by weapons supplied by a British arms supply and mercenary firm, Sandline International, according to government officials in Freetown.



Indonesian human rights activist Desmond Mahesa speaks at a news conference in Jakarta. Mahesa, who was kidnapped and released after two months, broke his silence Tuesday and testified that he was tortured during his detention. Mahesa, who is also a lawyer, said he was kidnapped on Feb. 3 by unidentified men near his office in Jakarta (Reuters photo)

## Indonesian activist tells of torture, abduction

JAKARTA (AFP) — Indonesian lawyer Desmond Mahesa told Tuesday how he was abducted at gun point and held for two months by members of an organised group in the second such testimony to be aired in the country.

"I have to tell the truth," Mr. Mahesa told journalists at a press conference at the Indonesian Legal Aid foundation.

He said he was speaking out even though he was told not to say anything by his captors because he, his family and friends had been repeatedly harassed by people he believed were security officials since his release on April 3.

Mr. Mahesa, who heads the Nusantara private legal aid foundation, said he was kidnapped at gun-point by two men shortly after getting off a public mini-bus in Central Jakarta on Feb. 3.

He said he was blindfolded and taken to an unknown location where he was interrogated and tortured later that same day.

"My hands were handcuffed to a chair, my feet were handcuffed ... I was given electric shocks, beaten and shoes (feet) were shoved into my chest," Mr. Mahesa said.

The press conference here was also attended by members of the National Commission on Human Rights and four officers from the national police headquarters.

Mr. Mahesa gave the same details about his abduction as Pius Lustrilang who was the first to tell the commission about his kidnapping in testimony on April 27.

Mr. Lustrilang and Mr. Mahesa were among a group of several students and activists to have been reported missing in January only to resurface later.

"Desmond (Mahesa) gave the same information as Pius so his testimony only reinforces Pius' statement," commission member Albert Hasibuan said.

The commission concluded after Mr. Lustrilang's testimony that he had been abducted by an organised group but fell short of pointing the finger at the security forces. The military have denied any knowledge of involvement in the disappearances and pledged to investigate.

Echoing Mr. Lustrilang's statement, Mr. Mahesa said he was kept for exactly two months in a cell where he also conversed with several other activists, including Mr. Lustrilang, incarcerated in other cells.

However, he said he was only tortured once, on the day of his abduction.

He named six other activists whom he said were at one time or another detained in the same building.

Students have led weeks of protests in Indonesia calling for political and economic reforms amid the country's worst ever financial crisis.

On the day before Mr. Mahesa was released his captors told him to say that he had been in Irian Jaya on a mission instead of being detained.

In return, he was taken to the airport on April 3 and given a ticket to Banjarmasin.

South Kalimantan, his home town. "I was also told to report

periodically about my whereabouts until May 1 by contacting a pager number," he said giving the number.

He was only told to relay the number of the telephone where he could be reached.

One person who had come to question his family and friends after his release had been in uniform while others had claimed to belong to the security forces.

"Up until this day, there are still seven people missing," said Munir, a lawyer of the Legal Aid Institute, naming them all activists.

Mr. Lustrilang left for the Netherlands on the same day he testified at the commission. He has since talked about his abduction in several countries, including in the United States.

Mr. Mahesa said he has no intention of leaving the country until all the cases of the disappearance have been solved.

"I am prepared to give information where ever I am needed ... to whatever institution is interested in the case of the disappearances," Mr. Mahesa said.

Munir said Mr. Mahesa, accompanied by a team of lawyers would provide information about his ordeal to the military police headquarters on Wednesday.

Military chief General Wiranto has said the armed forces have set up a small team to investigate the disappearances and whether any members of the military were involved.

Mr. Hasibuan said they will await the military's findings but if they "gave rise to doubts we (the commission) will set up an independent team" to probe the cases.

## China condemns Indian nuclear tests as destabilising

BEIJING (AFP) — China Tuesday condemned India's nuclear tests as a threat to regional peace.

"India's conducting of nuclear test runs against international trend and is detrimental to the peace and stability of the South-Asian region," Foreign Ministry spokesman Zhu Bangzao was quoted as saying by the official Xinhua news agency.

The spokesman said the Chinese government is "seriously concerned" about the three test blasts carried out Monday.

He cited gradual progress made in global nuclear arms reductions, the recent extension of a non-proliferation treaty and the signing last year of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) by most countries.

China took 24 hours to officially react to Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee's surprise announcement and was the last of the five recognised nuclear powers to issue a statement.

China is India's only neighbour with a proven nuclear weapons programme, although rival Pakistan is also believed capable of producing

nuclear arms.

At a press conference earlier, Mr. Zhu refused to comment on whether the tests would prompt China to resume its own nuclear tests, suspended since July 1996, after which China signed the CTBT.

China fought a border war with India in 1962, and

tensions between the two giant neighbours — which had been on a gradual upwards trend — flared last week after India's defence minister, George Fernandes, identified China as India's "number-one threat."

He said "the potential threat from China is greater than that from Pakistan and any person concerned about India's security must agree with that fact."

The comments provoked a harsh reaction from China's foreign ministry.

But Mr. Fernandes followed up with more anti-China rhetoric Thursday, calling for stronger defences along the two countries' border.

"Some Indian officials recently repeatedly made remarks against China. We've already expressed our deep regret," Mr. Zhu said Tuesday.

Beijing criticised Washington in July last year for conducting low-level tests, but has in turn been accused of supplying nuclear technology to Pakistan.

The 1962 Sino-Indian border war led to a virtual freeze in bilateral ties for 14 years, but relations have been on the mend, with several recent high-level visits.

People's Liberation Army chief General Fu Quanyou visited India last month.

India says China still holds 40,000 square kilometres of its territory in Kashmir, while China lays claim to a swathe of Indian territory in the far eastern state of Arunachal Pradesh.

## India nuclear blast surprised U.S. intelligence

WASHINGTON (AFP) — India's nuclear blast took U.S. intelligence agencies by surprise, the Washington Times reported Tuesday, citing top government intelligence officials.

The intelligence groups charged with monitoring such blasts were embarrassed to admit that India managed to deceive U.S. satellites and ground spies during the weeks leading to the test explosion Monday in northwestern India.

"We had zero warning," an administration official close to the CIA told the Times.

The U.S. National Security Agency (NSA) and the U.S. National Reconnaissance Office (NRO) rely on spy satellites to monitor preparations for nuclear tests.

However a Senate aide told the newspaper that not one of three tests that India carried out before Monday's blast was detected.

The Indians "went out of their way to do it in a way that wouldn't be detected," an unnamed top government official told the Washington Times. "We've been watching the site fairly carefully and on a fairly regular basis."

One specialist consulted by the newspaper — John Pike, a technical intelligence specialist with the Federation of American Scientists — called the U.S. inability to foresee the nuclear blast "the intelligence failure of the decade."

## Eight injured after plane catches fire in Tokyo

TOKYO (AFP) — Eight people were injured after an engine caught fire on a United Airlines aircraft on the runway of Tokyo's Narita airport Tuesday, officials said.

The Boeing 747, flight UA 801 which was waiting to take off for Hong Kong, was immediately evacuated after the incident at 6:20 p.m. (0920 GMT), an airport official said.

Eight people were injured as they left the aircraft, the official said. It was not immediately clear how many passengers were on the aircraft.

The fire broke out in the aircraft's number one engine, on the left wing, and was quickly extinguished.

Television footage showed the empty aircraft standing on the runway with all its emergency evacuation chutes deployed.

## Cambodian forces make advances against Khmer Rouge

PHNOM PENH (R) — Cambodian government troops have advanced against Khmer Rouge guerrillas in the north of the country, capturing rebel positions near the Thai border and two tanks, military officials said Tuesday.

Soldiers were searching for Khmer Rouge chief Ta Mok and other rebel leaders, but their whereabouts remained a mystery, they said.

Regional military commander General Chea Mon said government forces had seized Khmer Rouge positions at Choam, in forested high ground near the border.

"We totally captured the Choam area yesterday afternoon. We captured one tank abandoned by the Khmer Rouge and one armoured vehicle," the general told Reuters.

He said some Khmer Rouge fighters had apparently fled across the border to refugee camps in Thailand, others had scattered in the jungle and five had defected to the government.

Another senior military official said a second Khmer Rouge tank was captured early Tuesday.

The Khmer Rouge have been crippled by a wave of mass defections to the government since late March when disgruntled troops mutinied and seized their headquarters at Anlong Veng, about 16 km south of the border.

Ta Mok and his loyalists withdrew to an escarpment running along the border with Thailand where they have been battling government troops.

Former Khmer Rouge chief Pol Pot, under whose 1975-79 rule an estimated 1.7 million people perished, died in the shrinking rebel zone on April 15.

Gen. Chea Mon said Ta Mok's loyalists were being reduced by a daily trickle of defections to the government, and he now had only about 100 fighters compared with about 300 several weeks ago.

He said after the weekend gains, the remaining fighters have no choice, they will defect. However, Thai military sources monitoring the fighting on the Cambodian side of the border say Ta Mok has about 1,000 men.

The Cambodian commanders said Ta Mok's whereabouts were not known, but they speculated he might have slipped into

Thailand.

Thai Prime Minister Chuan Leekpai assured Cambodian leader Hun Sen in talks in Bangkok last week there were no Khmer Rouge leaders in Thailand and if any crossed the border they would be arrested.

The Cambodian government says it wants Ta Mok and two other top Khmer Rouge officials — Khieu Samphan and Nuon Chea — brought before an international tribunal to answer for their roles during Pol Pot's rule.

A Thai business associate of Ta Mok said the guerrilla boss was now under the control of his army chief of staff, Khem Nguon, in forest near the Sangam border pass.

It's not house arrest but he's under the control of Khem Nguon and he's not allowed to contact anyone, the businessman told Reuters in Bangkok. They blame him for being so stubborn and sticking to his tough stand. Some analysts of the secretive guerrilla group have said Ta Mok's authoritarian leadership and his refusal to share the spoils of logging deals led to the March mutiny and the subsequent defections and military losses.

## New data shows economic benefits of cholesterol-lowering in healthy population

ATLANTA, Georgia — The cholesterol-lowering drug lovastatin is the first "statin" therapy ever shown to reduce expensive cardiovascular-related hospitalisations and surgical procedures in men and women with normal or near-normal cholesterol — lowering these events by 29 per cent — according to the final results of the Air Force/Texas Coronary Atherosclerosis Prevention Study (AFCAPS/TexCAPS) presented today at the American College of Cardiology annual meeting.

AFCAPS/TexCAPS was designed to determine life treatment with lovastatin would decrease first coronary events such as heart attack or the chest pain known as unstable angina requiring hospitalisation in men and women without heart disease who have average LDL (or "bad") cholesterol and reduced HDL (or "good") cholesterol.

Data presented at ACC showed that lovastatin reduced the risk for first heart attack by 40 per cent. The study began in 1990 and was scheduled to conclude in 1998, but was ended early due to favourable results in the study population.

"The AFCAPS results affirm the significant clinical and economic value of lowering cholesterol in generally healthy people never before considered eligible for cholesterol-lowering treatment," said Antonio M. Gotto, Jr., M.D., D. Phil., Stephen and Suzanne Weiss Dean of Cornell University Medical College, Chairman and Spokesman for the AFCAPS/TexCAPS Steering Committee.

"To determine whether someone is at risk for heart disease, it is important to know the HDL cholesterol level in addition to the total cholesterol. For those patients who have low HDL levels despite normal total

cholesterol levels, treatment with lovastatin can significantly reduce the risk of heart attack and help people live healthier lives."

Further analysis of AFCAPS found that treatment with lovastatin in this population had costs and benefits similar to the common clinical practice of using antihypertensive therapy to prevent heart attacks in people with high blood pressure.

"The data from AFCAPS show that treatment with lovastatin to lower cholesterol in generally healthy people at risk for heart disease is as justifiable as the use of antihypertensive medication in a similar population," Dr. Gotto said.

The AFCAPS data was evaluated to assess the effect of treatment with lovastatin on the use of health care resources, including hospitalisations and procedures such as bypass and angioplasty to clear blocked arteries. The

final analysis of AFCAPS/TexCAPS demonstrated that therapy with lovastatin resulted in:

- 29 per cent fewer hospitalisations and cardiovascular procedures (including both diagnostic and therapeutic procedures)
- 32 per cent fewer therapeutic procedures (e.g., heart surgery or angioplasty)
- 23 per cent fewer diagnostic tests (e.g., electrocardiograms, cardiac catheterisations)
- 28 per cent lower total cardiovascular disease costs.

According to the American Heart Association, direct and indirect costs of cardiovascular disease, which include medical therapies and interventions as well as costs to patients and families such as lost wages, disability payments and nursing home expenses, are estimated to total more than \$274 billion

in 1998. Last year, hospitalisations for cardiovascular disease alone are estimated to cost nearly \$120 billion.

Despite recent therapeutic advances, every 33 seconds an American dies of cardiovascular disease. That translates into more than 954,000 deaths annually or 42 per cent of all deaths in the U.S. each year.

The American Heart Association estimates that in the next year, as many as 1.5 million Americans will suffer a first or recurrent heart attack, and one-third will die as a result.

Lovastatin, which is available in 85 countries, is widely known as MEVACORTM and is currently used by three million patients worldwide. It was introduced in 1987 by MSD, a research-driven pharmaceutical company that discovers, develops, manufactures and markets a broad range of innovative health care products.

## Hijacked tanker crew kept on board pending query

SINGAPORE (R) — The crew of the Petro Ranger oil tanker, intercepted by Chinese authorities after it was hijacked last month, will not be released until an investigation is complete, its agents said Tuesday.

All the crew and captain are on board, they are being looked after by the marine police. They are getting provisions and are treated quite well, said C.M. Tan, executive director of Petroships Pte Ltd, the managing agents.

He was speaking by telephone from Haikou, the capital of the southern Chinese island province of Hainan.

Mr. Tan said the 21-member crew, including Australian Master Kenneth Blyth, received almost daily visits from the Australian and Malaysian consuls.

He said the Chinese authorities have not indicated how long the investigations would take or when the crew, who have been in Haikou since April 26, would be allowed to

leave.

Nobody can tell us (when investigations would be over). All they say is we have to be patient. They said it's a complex case involving many countries, Mr. Tan said.

Mr. Tan, who has not been on board the Malaysian-owned and registered Petro Ranger, said only the consuls were allowed to see the crew, and he was told they are in good spirits.

They are well taken care of... (but) if it drags on it could affect the morale. They are in high spirits, Mr. Tan said.

The 12,357 deadweight tonne vessel was reported missing one day after it set sail from Singapore on April 16 bound for Ho Chi Minh city in southern Vietnam laden with 11,165 tonnes of diesel and kerosene worth \$1.5 million.

The tanker was detained in Chinese waters while attempting to smuggle the cargo, and 12 Indonesians were detained on charges of piracy, smuggling and illegal entry, a Hainan official said on May 4.

The 12 have not been charged yet, Mr. Tan said, he said the crew were found unharmed and have undergone medical check-ups to make sure that they were all right.

The tanker's crew is composed of seven Malaysians, six Indonesians, four Bangladeshis, one Filipino, a Ghanaian, and a Myanmar national in addition to the Australian master.

Mr. Tan said some of the tanker's cargo had been discharged, but he could not quantify how much was taken.

Chinese officials said maritime officials intercepted the tanker in Chinese waters on April 26 on suspicion of smuggling and escorted it to Haikou.

A Hainan provincial government official said the Indonesians were armed with daggers when they boarded the tanker in international waters in the south China sea off the coast of Malaysia and Vietnam.







## Shbeilat sentenced to 9 months

(Continued from page 1)

was released on bail "because he was convicted of a felony with a punishment term that exceeds three months."

Mr. Mjalli told the court in his closing argument earlier this month that Mr. Shbeilat's case was politically motivated and was aimed at "restricting the freedom of speech and expression that is guaranteed by the Constitution."

Mr. Shbeilat, a former Lower House of Parliament deputy, was detained by the authorities on his way back to Amman on Feb. 20, after delivering a sermon at Ma'an's main mosque a day before pro-Iraqi unrest broke out in the southern town.

In a 30-page ruling, the court rejected moves by Mr. Mjalli to contest the investigation procedures taken by the court's prosecution and said that "all questioning, searching and other evidence gathered by the prosecution were conducted in accordance with the law."

The court said it relied on testimonies of witnesses who amended Mr. Shbeilat's sermon, including one given by Ahmad Mohammad, a religious leader in Ma'an.

Mr. Mohammad quoted Mr. Shbeilat as slamming the official stand taken by the Jordanian government vis-a-vis Iraq by claiming that "Jordan was conspiring with other neighbouring countries in imposing (U.N.-enforced) economic sanctions on Iraq."

"Jordan is mobilising its army on the Jordanian-Iraqi border to participate in the (U.S.) strike... The joint military training between Jordan and the U.S. is aimed at striking Iraq," court transcripts quoted Mr. Shbeilat as saying in his sermon.

The transcript said that after Mr. Shbeilat "made these lies,

he asked worshippers to take a stand and confront the government and save Jordan's sons and daughters from death in the war against Iraq."

Mr. Shbeilat also accused the government of Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali of neglecting Ma'an and of denying its residents proper health, education and other day-to-day services, the court said.

"This is a low-calibre, Zionist and silly government and people are more stupid if they back it and stay with it," the court transcript quoted him as saying. It accused Mr. Shbeilat of misleading the people by accusing the Jordanian government of selling land to "Zionist companies" through an ambitious economic privatisation scheme.

"Jordan is being sold as Palestine was sold... the Jordanian government has sold Jordanian properties to the Zionists... there will be no Jordan by the year 2000," it quoted him as saying. "Instead, Jordan will be a Zionist colony."

Col. Faouri said before issuing the verdict: "It is clear to the court that Mr. Shbeilat's false and deceiving accusations targeted the people's feelings and emotions and infuriated them."

Mr. Shbeilat, former president of the Jordan Engineers Association, was pardoned twice by His Majesty King Hussein in 1992 and 1996, after being convicted by the State Security Court of treason and lese majeste.

The verdict, handed down by the military tribunal, which also included Judges Fawaz Bqour and Ahmad Ayash, also ordered the seizure of two personal computers and computer discs, and statements that belonged to Mr. Shbeilat.

## The truth about the pharaohs? BOOK REVIEW

**Akhenaten: Dweller in Truth**  
By Naguib Mahfouz  
The American University in Cairo Press, 1998;  
English translation of al-'Aish fi-l-haqiqa (1985).

IN THIS book, Naguib Mahfouz returns to ancient Egypt, the setting of his very first three novels, published in the late 30s and early 40s. The themes explored in Akhenaten are, however, those associated with Mahfouz's later, more mature works, especially Children of Gebelawi (1959). Once again, Mahfouz has employed his skills as a storyteller to raise existential questions about faith, doubt and dissent, the relation of religion to politics, the quest for goodness and its tragic thwarting by human beings' propensity for violence and thirst for power.

Those who visit Karnak in Luxor, site of the ancient city of Thebes, are told by the BBC-produced Sound-and-Light Show that Akhenaten was the dissident pharaoh and a harbinger of monotheism. Hearing the voice of the one God led him to destroy the temples of Amun and other gods worshipped by his people, and build a new city governed by love, peace and joy, rather than coercion. This experiment was, however, short-lived. The empire centred in Thebes was threatened from within and without, and Akhenaten was replaced by his brother, Tutankhamun.

Despite its subject matter, this is not a typical historical novel. It neither recreates events nor establishes facts. Instead, it is deliberately crafted so as to leave the questions raised by Akhenaten's reign unanswered. To Mahfouz, the search for truth is "a path that has no beginning and no end, for it will always be extended by those who have a passion for eternal truth" (p. 4).

To achieve this open-ended effect, Mahfouz writes in voices — the technique employed in his 1967 novel Miramar, whereby the telling of a seemingly simple story by four different characters gives vent to diverse views on social change in Egypt. In the book at hand, 14 of Akhenaten's contemporaries give their account of the controversial ruler. To some, he was a heretic and a perverser, blamed for bringing ruin to Egypt. To others, he was insane or misguided, a victim, but nonetheless unsuited to be a pharaoh. To still others, he was a poet with great spiritual insight who heralded a new and better life, but was betrayed by cowardly followers and those with vested interests in the status quo.

Through these voices and the discrepancies between their accounts, Mahfouz delivers a social commentary on the prospects for democracy, equality and changing human behaviour. It is indicative that Akhenaten's opponents explain his faults by noting that both his mother and his wife,

Nefertiti, were commoners, whereas his followers put his bonds with the people in a positive light. "The old traditions that had separated the common people from the pharaohs were no longer exercised" (p. 122).

Akhenaten and Nefertiti walked among the people without guards. The young pharaoh abolished the practice of sacrificing slaves to the gods, and relieved the poor of their dues, wanting to change the system whereby pharaohs had based their greatness "on a pyramid of poor people's corpses" (p. 50). Akhenaten also abolished punishment, believing that humans could better be disciplined with love: "what love cannot cure, fear will not correct," he said (p. 121). But like all reformers, Akhenaten was faced with a backlash. Adherents of the hierarchical system saw in his message of equality, love and peace "an open invitation to rebelliousness and strife," and conspired to get rid of him (p. 39).

Mahfouz seems not so concerned with the clash between religious doctrines, as with the political and social fall-out from this clash. Akhenaten's demise shows the tragedies that can occur when religion and politics overlap with intolerance. It is this overlap which almost cost Mahfouz his life four years ago, and which continues to cause great human losses in Egypt and Algeria.

Sally Bland



## Annan, Aziz reiterate will to overcome 'problems'

(Continued from page 1)

weapons inspection crisis.

Accusing certain Security Council members of having "a special agenda against Iraq," he added: "We hope that the Secretary-General... will help us to correct the situation."

"The time has come to lift the sanctions," Mr. Aziz said. "We will continue to cooperate with the United Nations. But at the same time we would like the United Nations... to work as expeditiously as they can in order to lift the sanctions."

Said Mr. Annan: "We will also do our part and make sure the work [of weapons inspections team] is completed as soon as possible."

In meetings with French politicians earlier, Mr. Aziz referred to "lots of difficulties" with UNSCOM.

"We'd like our friends in France to show more understanding, more support for the legitimate cause of Iraq," he said.

The meeting with Mr. Annan had not originally been on the

Iraqi's programme of talks with French officials, including President Jacques Chirac.

Last Friday, Mr. Annan said that since February, Iraq had opened eight presidential palaces it had previously balked at giving inspectors access to, and also allowed inspectors into locations they had not been allowed to inspect for "about seven years."

Mr. Aziz said he hoped for the re-establishment of diplomatic relations with France, which Iraq broke off during the 1991 Gulf war.

"Normally, the relations should be reestablished because we don't have any bilateral conflict with France," Mr. Aziz said. "But we'll discuss this matter in an objective manner with our French counterparts."

France, which has taken a softer line on economic sanctions than fellow U.N. Security Council members the United States and Britain, has reopened an interests section in Baghdad in the last two years.

## Sahhaf: No rush for dialogue with U.S.

(Continued from page 1)

interest, respect of Arab states and their sovereignty and independence."

Mr. Sahhaf described Iraq's ties with Jordan as "good" and denied that bilateral relations had deteriorated because of political and other differences.

He said, any speculation about a deterioration in links was "baseless."

"Ties between Iraq and Jordan are deep-rooted," he said. "I believe that this relationship will be enhanced now and in the future."

He was replying to a question on whether the defection of Hussein Kamel, a former top Iraqi military official and son-in-law of Iraqi President Saddam Hussein, and his brother to Amman in 1995, had any impact on bilateral relations.

"Ties between countries are not based on individualistic behaviour. We do not react to such things," Mr.

Sahhaf said. Jordanian-Iraqi economic ties have escaped political tension since Jordan began calling for democratic change in Iraq three years ago.

Amman continues to import all of its oil supplies from Baghdad which in turn provides a main market for Jordanian goods sanctioned by the U.N.

During his three-day visit, Mr. Sahhaf met with His Majesty King Hussein and delivered him a verbal message from President Saddam.

Mr. Sahhaf repeated that Iraq will not apologise to Kuwait for the seven-month-old occupation of the emirate, a key demand for reconciliation by its southern neighbour.

"Iraq is not obliged to apologise, but others who are demanding such a thing should apologise to Iraq and its people because they were part of the genocide against our people," the Iraqi minister added.



Sara (and her uncle) and Meena, popular comic-book heroines in a UNICEF production

## UNICEF comic-book project aims to help young girls

By Clyde Sanger

NAIROBI — A young girl called Sara, dressed always in a plain blue shirt and skirt and usually accompanied by her pet monkey, Zingo, has become a star in large parts of Africa.

She is talked about in the refugee camps of western Tanzania. Schoolchildren in Guinea Bissau discuss her adventures. Street-kids in Nairobi have been singing a song — "Life is getting tough, I don't know what to do" — that Sara once sang to an audience of one: a blue lizard.

Sara is no pop star. She is the central character in a series of comic books produced by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) in east and central Africa.

Only two books have so far been published, but UNICEF claims that she "is quickly becoming a role model and symbol for girls' empowerment in Africa." She is about 12 and faces all the obstacles that adolescent girls in modern Africa stumble on — and she overcomes them with a mixture of a smart mind, courage and a few useful friends, including the mischievous Zingo.

Sara manages to stay in school, despite her greedy uncle who pockets the money for her fees. She makes a smokeless cooking stove for her mother. She rescues her friend Amina from being sexually abused by truckdrivers. In later episodes she will turn the tables on a businessman who likes to molest young girls, and will escape from the clutches of older women, including her grandmother, who are intent on circumcis-

ing her. She is the brainchild of as many as 50 people, spread from Eritrea to South Africa, which is probably the main reason why she and her comic-book relatives are so widely accepted.

In a sense, Sara is the half-sister of an Asian girl called Meena, who was created by a team working out of Bangladesh. Central to that team was a UNICEF communications director, Neill McKee from Canada. But Nuzhat Shahzadi, with a background in public health in Bangladesh, and Dr. Mira Aghi of India, with production experience on the internationally acclaimed children's TV programme, Sesame Street, added their skills.

Rachel Carnegie, who had worked in Bhutan as a teacher for the British organisation, Voluntary Service Overseas, wrote the first script.

Meena is about nine years old and has a pet parrot. Her first problem was to get any schooling at all. It was a story drawn directly from life in Bhutan, but it applied equally well to Bangladesh.

When McKee, who has a film-maker's background, was transferred to Nairobi in 1994, he was eager to produce a similar character in an African context.

At a planning meeting in Machakos that year, he was urged on by Dr. Specioza Kazibwe, who was then minister for gender and is now vice-president of Uganda. Dr. Kazibwe, who is a surgeon, had gone through her own struggle, as the only girl in a family with eight brothers, to get schooling

against the views of a polygamist father.

Others at the Machakos meeting added their experiences. A young Kenyan sociology graduate, Justus Otielo, told of the research he and others had done among the 45,000 people on and near Rusinga Island, in Lake Victoria, which led to their forming groups to help girls facing "pushout" from school and other problems.

Afterwards, some 60 story lines were submitted, and four were chosen to develop as priority subjects. It took nearly two years to produce the first book, training artists and organising meetings of researchers and focus groups to make sure the story and pictures were culturally acceptable in more than a dozen countries. Several of the Meena team have helped with training.

Much thought went into the names of main characters, to suit religious sensitivities. Sara being a Christian name, her close friend Amina has a Muslim one. At one time, they thought of combining those names for the main part, only to find that Saramina means "mucous" in a Malawian language.

They settled on the nasty — not quite villainous — figure being an uncle, while knowing that most abuse of young girls comes from parents. They wanted fathers who read the books to be carried along with its messages, not alienated nor put on the defensive.

The episode on female circumcision, still in draft form, has required the lightest touch. In Kenya even today as many as 60 per cent of young girls undergo this contro-

versial rite at puberty.

"We wanted to avoid an 'us versus them' situation, which preaching would have triggered," says Otielo, now one of the project managers. "So we focus on local happenings in a village — the dangers of infection, and of death in childbirth, and we put these warnings in the mouth of the schoolteacher, a woman from another tribe."

The teacher's name is Ms. Matata, the happy thought of the Tanzanian poet and scriptwriter Richard Mbalala. The Swahili phrase "hakuna matata" means "no problem," but he explains it can also mean that "she is a non-sense person." The principal character artists, Joel Chikware and Vic Kasinja, come from Zimbabwe and Malawi.

The books and videos have been published in English, French, Portuguese and Swahili, and a 13-part radio series has been aired in Hausa as well.

Officials in Kenya's health and education ministries, as well as non-government organisations, have made wide use of the books, says Otielo, and Kenya television has run both the English and Swahili versions. Other countries report the same enthusiastic response.

Clyde Sanger is former director of communications at the Ottawa-based North-South Institute. He has worked as a journalist in the U.N., and in Britain, Kenya and Canada, where he has lived since 1967.

— Gemini News







## Daily Beat

A review of news from the Arabic Press

### Jordan National Shipping Lines Company distributes 8% dividends despite sharp drop in profit

THE UNFAVOURABLE situation in maritime transport in the region and the world during 1997 has sharply cut the profit of the Jordan National Shipping Lines Company (JNSLC). Board Chairman Fati Khamis told the general assembly. He indicated that profit went down by 77 per cent from JD1.36 million in 1996 to JD313,000 in 1997.

He revealed that the company is studying the establishment of a line to serve Red Sea ports and another regular maritime line between India and Jordan in cooperation with a local firm. The company, he said, is also considering setting up a shipping line between the Mediterranean Sea and the Red Sea.

In order to face the deteriorating market conditions, Mr. Khamis indicated that JNSLC plans to reduce vessel costs to the lowest possible level and to enter the competition of leasing the company's vessels in international markets.

The chairman said the economic crises which hit the countries of South East Asia "have frozen" the maritime activity and caused a higher supply of ships. Consequently, leasing rates have dropped sharply and maritime transport charges declined.

Dr. Khamis explained that the company spent JD5.3 million to service its vessels in 1997 but was only able to generate JD4.9 million of earnings during the year. However, the company received JD1.23 million in return on its investment in various companies compared to JD1.12 million in 1996.

He mentioned that in line with the plans to diversify the ports of loading and unloading, the company continued to deliver goods from the ports of Petersburg in Russia, Qabes in Tunisia and Bilbao in Spain to the ports of Jeddah, Port Sudan, Musawa, Oman and Um Qasr. These ports were in addition to the traditional routes in Germany, Britain and Belgium that the company serves regularly.

According to the annual report, the company's total assets stand at about JD19.8 million and the shareholders' equity at JD12.7 million. Receivables shot up from JD2.6 million to JD4.1 million as a result of settling past disputed issues. Payable accounts also increased by 22 per cent.

The company, which owns four vessels and a 25 per cent in the Concord (a vessel operating between Agaba and the Egyptian port of Nuweibi), is the general agent for the Arab Maritime Bridge Company in addition to the continued services of transporting large quantities of Jordanian potash and phosphate to various world destinations.

The company is currently distributing JD555,000 in dividends following the general assembly to reward the shareholders with an eight per cent return on their investment (Al Ra'i + Al Aswaq + Al Arab Al Yawm).

### Jordan wins \$27.7m export deals to Iraq

AMMAN (Petra) — The United Nations Security Council's boycott committee has approved ten Jordanian contracts to supply Iraq with products within the framework of the oil for food agreement signed between Iraq and the United Nations.

The contracts, worth \$27,689,603 million, allow Jordanian companies to export \$25,872,000 million worth of vegetable oil, \$1,472,000 of medicine and \$472,000 of table salt.

Industry and Trade Minister Hani Mulki said the total amount of Jordanian contracts within the framework of the memorandum of understanding has reached \$243,700,000 million.

### Lebanon to issue another billion dollars in Eurobonds

BEIRUT (AFP) — Lebanon is preparing to offer a billion dollars in Eurobonds on international markets. Lebanon Banks Association President Farid Raphael said.

Global depositary receipts (GDRs), another financial instrument, will also be issued to raise money on international markets, said Mr. Raphael.

Three Lebanese banks will soon issue GDRs said Mr. Raphael, whose association represents 81 banks doing business in Lebanon.

The U.S. financial company Merrill Lynch, which sponsored the first issue of Lebanese financial instruments on foreign markets in October 1994, will take the lead in the next issue, banking officials said.

At the end of March, the French bank Paribas sponsored an issue of a billion dollars in Eurobonds, of which 65 per cent were subscribed by seven large Lebanese banks. Lebanon has \$14.5 billion in foreign debts in January, an amount equivalent to 96 per cent of the country's gross domestic product (GDP).

In November, the Lebanese government decided to borrow \$2 billion on the international markets to convert its foreign debt to domestic debt. The next billion-dollar issue represents the second portion of that loan.

The Lebanese budget deficit reached 22 per cent of GDP in 1997.

### Insurance firms will not be given extra time to meet capital requirement rules

By Ghali Alul  
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The Ministry of Industry and Trade said Tuesday it would not extend a grace period given for Jordan's 27 insurance companies to raise their capital to JD2 million in line with new rules.

Basil Hindawi, Controller of insurance companies at the ministry, also said legal measures would be taken against all firms who failed to meet the March 30 deadline. He did not elaborate.

Dr. Hindawi said most insurance firms had met the new capital requirements while others were considering mergers, a vital step that will help them cope with international competition brought about by economic globalisation and liberalisation.

The 27 insurance firms who employ about 7,000 workers have a registered capital of about JD65 million and a market turnover of JD90 million — equal to 1.7 per cent of the gross domestic product (GDP).

Officials say such a percentage remains modest when compared to other developing countries where insurance accounts for 10 per cent of the GDP.

The capital requirement rules will boost efforts to modernise the insurance industry through a new legislation compatible with international standards.

"The law, prepared in cooperation with international experts, will enable the regulatory body to have effective supervision over the industry," said Dr. Hindawi.

The draft law, which was initially discussed at a seminar in March by representatives of several insurance firms, is designed to raise the efficiency of the sector, improve the competitiveness of Jordanian firms, strengthen the country's insurance market and improve the training of staff manning it.

"The law is currently being reviewed by the Council of Ministers. Once approved it will go to the Parliament," Dr. Hindawi added.

### Citibank Jordan launches an EMU awareness session

AMMAN (J.T.) — In conjunction with the Institute of Banking Studies, Citibank Jordan recently held an EMU awareness session to a large number of the bank's clients in Jordan representing financial institutions, corporates and other institutions.

Suhair Ali, general manager of Citibank Jordan spoke about the fast pace with which the monetary and economic integration in Europe is proceeding and which will culminate with the creation of a single currency, the euro to be launched on Jan. 1, 1999. EMU will begin with 11-member countries, who will have a common central bank and a single currency.

This is truly a major event as the currency will belong to countries who account for 19.4 per cent of the world's gross domestic product (GDP) and are responsible for close to 19 per cent of world trade," she said.

The euro will essentially become the world's second currency after the U.S. dollar and may increasingly challenge the U.S. dollar as a reserve currency.

She also spoke of the impending creation of the European Central Bank and the role that it will play in achieving monetary stability in the EMU.

The European Monetary Union (EMU) will have profound effects on both commercial and capital flows, Mrs. Ali indicated.

George Mead, programme director at Citibank's Training Centre in Istanbul gave a detailed presentation on the EMU background, the current EMU situation, and the implications that the EMU will have for the bank's customers and for the banks themselves. He also explained the impact that the EMU would have on the money markets, securities markets, and equities.

Over the past week, Citibank, in conjunction with the Institute of Banking Studies has also held a specialised training seminar entitled "Credit and Risk Management." The intensive five-day seminar was attended by 31 participants representing senior and middle management of the various Jordanian banks and institutions.

## REUTERS REUTERS

### The Business of Information

Major Currencies & Cross Rates									
Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	CAD	ITL	NLG	FRF
US Dollar	-	1.7728	0.8123	1.4790	133.77	1.4313	1748.80	1.9388	5.9475
DE Mark	0.5641	-	0.3450	0.8342	75.43	0.8071	985.63	1.1267	3.3524
GB Sterling	1.6332	2.8977	-	2.4155	215.52	2.3375	2856.12	3.2637	9.7123
CH Franc	0.6761	1.19.80	0.4133	-	90.41	0.9669	1181.12	134.97	4.0164
JP Yen	0.0075	1.3247	0.4572	1.1053	-	1.0895	13.06	148.27	4.4228
CA Dollar	0.6887	1.2816	0.4225	1.0586	1.07	-	1270.80	1.4551	4.3265
IT Lira	0.0006	1.0137	0.3499	0.0845	1308.55	0.8184	-	11.42	3.3980
FL Guilder	0.0003	88.72	0.3061	74.04	66.91	0.7161	874.74	-	2.9743
NR Franc	0.1661	0.2981	0.1029	24.8784	22.48	0.2407	33.59	33.9900	-

Middle Eastern Currencies									
Currency	USD	JOD	SAR	BAH	QAT	KUW	AED	LBP	EGP
US Dollar	-	0.7090	3.7505	0.3770	3.6408	0.3057	3.6728	1512.30	3.4175
Jordan Dinar	1.4104	-	5.2898	0.6317	1.5351	0.4312	1.5803	2133.00	4.8202
Saudi Riyal	0.2666	0.1890	-	0.1005	0.97	0.8109	9.74	401.41	9.0650
Bahrain Dinar	2.86	1.8906	9.8483	-	0.88	0.8109	9.74	401.41	9.0650
Qatar Dinar	0.2747	0.1947	1.0301	1.0301	-	0.0840	1.01	416.38	0.9387
Kuwait Dinar	3.2712	2.3193	12.2686	1.2332	11.81	-	12.01	4947.01	0.9387
Emirates Dinar	0.2723	0.1930	1.0212	1.0205	0.9913	0.0832	-	411.76	0.9305
Lebanese/1000	0.66	0.4688	2.4800	0.2493	2.4075	0.2021	2.4286	-	2.2298
Egyptian	0.2925	0.2075	1.0974	0.1103	1.0653	0.0895	1.0747	442.52	-

Energy									
Oil	Last	Review							
Brent	16.72	14.25							
W. Texas	16.20	15.21							
Bonny	16.72	14.25							
Dubai	13.18	12.82							
UL Gas	159.00	159.00							

Metal Prices									
Metal	Bid	Offer							
Gold (oz's)	298.5	299							
Silver (oz's)	5.74	5.77							
Platinum (oz's)	388	388							
AL (3 Months)	1367	1390							
CU (3 Months)	1731	1733							
Zinc (3 Months)	1093	1094							
Lead (3 Months)	546	547							
NI (3 Months)	5050	5080							

Commodity									
Commodity	Last	Delivery							
Coffee (c/b's)	132.75	Spot							
Cocoa (\$/ton)	1947	Spot							
Sugar (\$/ton)	274.2	Spot							
Wheat (\$/ton)	94	Spot							
Soya (c/b's)	29.54	Spot							
Barley (\$/bsh)	115	Spot							
Rice (\$/ton)	410	Spot							

JORDAN FINANCIAL MARKET										
HOUSING BANK CENTER AMMAN - SIDDIQI										
TELEPHONE NO. 50717 / 507175										
ORGANIZED MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR TUESDAY 12/05/1998										
PAST 12 MONTHS HIGH	PAST 12 MONTHS LOW	COMPANY'S NAME	P / E	DIV.	NO. OF TRACES	NO. OF SHARES	VALUE TRADED JD	OPEN PRICE	CLOSE PRICE	CHANGE
S 355.500	170.000	ARAB BANK	15.9	1.03	87	1650	318868	190.00	194.00	4.00+
S 2.340	1.620	JOR. NATIONAL BK.	13.6	4.29	12	2895	4813	1.67	1.67	-
S 3.540	1.250	BANK OF JORDAN	4.2	0.00	5	1850	2453	1.32	1.32	-
S 1.400	800	MID. EAST. INV. BK.	64.0	0.00	17	2075	1571	0.98	0.98	-
S 2.680	1.600	INDUSTRIAL DEV. BK.	8.2	8.81	6	1200	1922	1.60	1.60	-
S 6.160	4.460	THE HOUSING BK.	19.5	3.25	137	58654	354072	5.87	6.15	.28+
S 4.180	1.790	JOR. INVEST. BANK	9.9	0.00	10	1400	1400	1.91	1.96	.06+
S 920	590	JOR. CULP. BANK	3.9	10.61	7	9550	6303	0.66	0.66	-
S 4.020	1.740	JOR. ISLAMIC BANK	18.7	0.00	19	3762	6905	1.86	1.83	-.03
S 3.900	1.790	JOR. INTL. INV. BANK	10.0	0.00	7	43766	60071	1.53	1.55	.02+
W 2.350	1.550	JOR. INV. TR. BANK/DEV	9.9	0.00	7	38073	58968	1.55	1.47	-.08
W 1.400	800	BEIT AL-HAL (BEITRA)	4.4	0.00	6	2050	1864	0.87	0.91	.04+
BANK SECTOR TOTALS INDEX: 265.75 FCMB: -2.19 325 186250 842594										
2.400	1.590	JOR. FRENCH INSUR.	6.1	11.82	2	2450	3127	2.15	2.17	.02+
2.350	1.600	ARAB LIFE INSUR.	9.2	0.00	2	2100	4831	2.20	2.31	.11+
INSURANCE SECTOR TOTALS INDEX: 122.29 FCMB: +0.63 6 3630 8094										
2.240	1.620	JOR. ELECTRIC PWR.	9.9	5.42	15	9975	20170	2.01	2.03	.02+
S 5.500	2.450	HIDRA MINERALS	73.8	0.00	4	697	3137	5.50	4.50	-
S 1.550	.970	KATL. PORTFOLIO	43.5	0.00	5	1450	1571	1.09	1.09	-
S .590	.330	JORDAN INTL. TRAD.	9	0.00	3	450	164	.36	.37	.01+
S 9.500	6.700	ALRAI	8.7	7.06	1	80	425	8.40	8.50	.10+
S 4.600	2.890	JOR. INTL. INV. EDUC.	9.9	2.00	8	53650	214613	4.01	4.00	-.01
S 1.050	.740	JORDAN EXPAT. INV.	9	0.00	1	5000	4500	.90	.90	-
S 1.090	.590	ZAKRA EDUCATION	16.2	0.00	4	7200	6654	.92	.92	-
S 1.830	1.450	UNIFIED CO.	6.6	7.33	8	5450	8225	1.51	1.50	-.01
SERVICE SECTOR TOTALS INDEX: 114.67 FCMB: +0.20 49 83922 259457										
S 1.160	.960	ATTARQUEER	9	0.00	1	1000	1100	1.10	1.10	-
S 4.450	2.450	JOR. CEMENT FACT.	15.5	4.21	21	24994	65039	2.58	2.61	.03+
S 7.050	5.500	ARAB POTASH CO.	26.9	3.66	6	4350	23931	5.50	5.47	.03-
S 11.250	7.270	JOR. PETROL. REFINERY	10.1	8.59	17	3830	39742	10.33	10.35	.02+
S 1.470	1.040	WOOLLEN INDUSTRIES	10.7	7.41	1	60	137	1.35	1.35	.02-
S 2.070	1.100	INDUSTRIAL COMM. AR.	9	0.00	3	682	823	1.17	1.22	.05+
S 5.740	3.540	ARAB PHARM. IND.	14.5	3.80	28	15498	81408	5.22	5.26	.04+
S 4.750	2.680	JOR. PETROL. REFIN.	43.5	0.00	2	325	1138	3.68	3.50	.18-
S 6.350	4.650	DAN ALDAMA DV. INV.	6.9	6.14	2	250	1415	5.56	5.70	.14+
S 1.110	.670	ARAB PAPER COV. TRD.	21.4	0.00	2	950	665	.69	.70	.01+
S .620	.510	NATIONAL INDS.	9	0.00	6	8350	4342	.52	.52	-
S .760	.370	INTERMED. PETRO. CHEM.	9	0.00	12	14250	5843	.40	.41	.01+
S .590	.500	JOR. ROCKWELL IND.	9	0.00	2	550	281	.54	.51	.03-
S 3.000	.920	KATL. CABLE WIRE. MPAC	27.7	0.00	6	3225	2691	1.16	1.15	.01-
S .730	.330	JOR. SULPHO. CHEM.	11.4	0.00	2	800	300	.60	.60	-
S 1.160	1.150	ARAB PHARM. CHEM.	14.6	4.55	6	7100	9312	1.30	1.32	.02+
S 1.540	.810	UNIV. MOD. IND.	14.0	6.82	5	2250	1980	.88	.88	-
S 1.300	.670	JOR. IND. RESOURCES	9.3	14.49	5	3000	2700	.68	.69	.01+
S 1.620	1.320	KATL. CHLORINE	9.3	7.58	1	1000	1320	1.32	1.32	-
S 1.080	.810	JOR. NEW CABLE CO.	12.3	11.49	6	3900	3393	.87	.87	-
S 1.310	1.080	KATL. TOBACCO	7.3	5.60	8	9400	11750	1.26	1.26	.01-
S .680	.650	JORDAN STEEL	8.4	9.33	18	19599	14276	.74	.75	.01+
S .490	.570	MID. EAST. COMPLEX	10.7	0.00	10	8500	5015	.59	.69	-
INDUSTRIAL SECTOR TOTALS INDEX: 104.12 FCMB: +0.10 158 132253 277899										
GRAND TOTAL INDEX: 177.39 FCMB: -1.44 548 406055 138043										
PARALLEL MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR TUESDAY 12/05/1998										
N 1.050	.910	ECHOPT & FTM. BKE. 751	16.8	0.00	5	6500	4290	.91	.91	-
N 1.290	.480	MACH. REP. REPT. MAIN.	28.0	0.00	3	2000	1010	.50	.51	.01+
N .340	.340	JOR. TRADE FAC.	9	0.00	9	5650	2430	.53	.53	-
N .800	.660	UNION INV. 501	9	0.00	9	23046	5949	.76	.76	-
N .620	.360	ARAB FIN. TRUST.	9	0.00	6	5100	2101	.42	.41	-.01
N .720	1.010	AL-SHARQ TRD. CO.	10.0	0.00	40000	40000	1.01	1.01	0.00	-
N .780	.610	AL-DAMLIYAH	38.6	0.00	6	10050	6633	.60	.66	.02-
N 2.220	1.050	CENTURY INV. GROUP	9	0.00	5	2700	3920	1.40	1.47	.07+
N .120	.790	JOR. IND. INVEST. TRUST	12.3	0.00	9	4000	1058	.48	.48	-
N .670	.370	ARAB FOOD & MED.	9	0.00	7	9000	4320	.48	.48	-
N .470	.240	ARAB INTL. INV. TRD.	39.2	0.00	9	12520	5185	.34	.34	-
N .280	.280	KATL. TRD.	9	0.00	5	1000	1008	.48	.48	-
N .350	.360	KATL. MULT. ENG. MANCO	9	0.00	56	164800	74160	.32	.33	.01+
N .550	.310	KATKAS DRES & HOUTAS	9	0.00	1	950	304	.34	.32	-.02
N .400	.400	ARAB TRACT	9	0.00	190	100	106	.48	.48	-
N .690	.580	KIDRAT PHARM. 901	9	0.00	1	5000	2500	.59	.60	.01+
N 1.660	.860	UNION TOBACCO 87.5	9.7	8.22	3	3249	4847	1.52	1.52	-
N .340	.340	KATL. TRD.	9	0.00	5	1000	1008	.48	.48	-
N .450	.240	IND. ENG.	9	0.00	6	7600	2128	.27	.28	.01+
N .470	.330	KATL. CHEMICAL	13.1	0.00	6	6100	3050	.50	.50	-
N .950	.500	ADVANCED PHARM. IND.	13.0	0.00	16	6120	11761	.62	.64	.01-
N .570	.370	PEARL SAW. P. CONV.	9	0.00	2	1860	74	.40	.40	-
N .420	.310	FOOTWEAR	9	0.00	3	2950	10564	.52	.52	-
N .950	.470	OPTICALS HEARING 751	8.2	0.00	3	2600	1216	.62	.61	-.01
N 1.000	.750	KESBAL PAINT CO. 751	12.3	9.35	5	2500	1400	.82	.81	-.01
GRAND TOTAL 209 559546 297614										



## Jordan tops two lists as top sport pitchman

CHICAGO (AFP) — Basketball star Michael Jordan has topped two lists as the most popular sports figure for product-endorsement deals, with golf phenomenon Tiger Woods second in both.

The Chicago Bulls guard had the most earnings of any sports endorser in 1997 with \$47 million, almost twice as much as the \$24 million of runner-up Woods in figures released by Forbes magazine.

Jordan also won a poll of business and advertising executives asked to select the sport celebrity they most wanted to pitch their products. Jordan was the top choice with 79 first-place votes to 24 for Woods.

Burns Sports, a firm that hires sports figures for endorsement deals, conducted the survey, which Woods won last year by one vote over Jordan in the wake of the golfer's stunning victory at the Masters.

Senior golfer Arnold Palmer, auto racer Jeff Gordon and basketball star Grant Hill finished third through fifth in the poll. Palmer made \$16 million last year in endorsement deals to \$6.5 million for Gordon and eight million for Hill.

Jordan won his record 10th National Basketball Association scoring title this season and is guiding the Bulls in their playoff



Michael Jordan

quest for a third consecutive NBA crown and their sixth title in eight years.

The Bulls star has said he has not decided whether or not he will play after this season. He has vowed to play only for current Bulls coach Phil Jackson, who has been told by club management he will not be offered a contract beyond this season.

After retiring in 1993 and making an ill-fated attempt at reaching the major leagues in baseball, Jordan returned to the Bulls in 1995.

Jordan's television commercials featuring products such as shoes, sandwiches, underwear and drinks are staples of NBA telecasts in the United States.

## Schmeichel — one of the great bargain buys

PARIS (AFP) — Denmark goalkeeper Peter Schmeichel has to be one of the greatest bargain buys of all time.

Manchester United paid just £800,000 to Danish club Brøndby for Schmeichel's signature back in 1991, and the man dubbed "the great Dane" has since played a key role in United's almost constant run of success.

Now the powerful, outspoken custodian is hoping he can translate his success at club level to the World Cup arena.

Schmeichel's ongoing success with Manchester United must be bitter pill for Newcastle to swallow. They looked at signing him back in 1987, but decided he was too inexperienced.

United swooped after he had starred for Denmark in the 1988 Olympic qualifying tournament and he later ousted Troels Rasmussen as No.1 choice for the national side.

Throughout his career with Gladsaxe, Hvidovre, Brøndby and United, Schmeichel has been used to winning trophies.

He won four Danish League medals and a Danish Cup medal before joining United, where he has played on four Premiership winning teams and collected two FA Cup winners' medals.

Statistics show that United are almost 30 percent more likely to lose if Schmeichel is absent and that he concedes only an average of only 0.8 goals per game.

The 1992 season was certainly his most memorable to date with United winning the Premiership and Denmark taking out the European Nations title.

This year's tournament is his first chance to play in the World Cup. Denmark failed to qualify in both 1990 and 1994 but Schmeichel was an ever-present in their successful qualifying campaign this time around.

A brilliant shot-stopper and a commanding presence in the penalty area, he conceded only six goals in those eight games and Denmark's finish ahead of Croatia and Greece was built on his defensive security.

On the field, Schmeichel is an abrasive, prickly character, quick with a harsh word for teammates and rivals alike. Off the field, the United captain is a quiet, reclusive man who is savouring every moment of his continued success at the age of 34.

"I was a part-time player until I was 24," he recalls. "I had part-time jobs, did an apprenticeship as a carpet fitter, sold advertising for a local newspaper and worked as a cleaner. I know what real work is all about that makes me appreciate football all the more."

## Kostadinov vital talisman for Bulgaria

PARIS (AFP) — Emil Kostadinov's World Cup exploits have shown that despite being 30 years old he could be a vital talisman to bring luck to Bulgaria in France this summer.

The CSKA Sofia striker was responsible for weeks of national celebrations after his last-minute goal against France helped them qualify for the 1994 World Cup. His right-footed goal with just seconds to go, when David Ginola gave the ball away from defence and Luboslav Penev set him up for the finish, meant Bulgaria made a last-ditch qualification and went all the way to the semi-finals in USA '94.

His mere presence in France will be a source of motivation for his teammates and his experience invaluable to the side. He has a UEFA Cup winners medal for Bayern Munich in 1996 although they were pipped by Borussia Dortmund in the Bundesliga, but since then



he has played for Fenerbahce in Turkey and UNAM in Mexico before returning to CSKA earlier this year.

His experience in a major finals should prove important for coach Hristo Bonev. Kostadinov played in all seven of their USA 94 matches up to the semi-final. And, though subbed in five of those matches, it

was always late in the game after he had contributed well.

He began at CSKA Sofia in the 1984/85 year as a right winger and two seasons later was a key member of the attack with his future Bulgarian national team colleagues Hristo Stoichkov and Luboslav Penev.

In the 1988/89 season he

had a fabulous year as CSKA, cruising to the Bulgarian title and reaching the semi-finals of the European Cup Winners Cup. Kostadinov scored 12 goals in the league and three in European as his goalscoring came of age for both club and country.

In 1990, he moved to Porto and established himself as a key member of the club with good speed, vision and a powerful right foot shot.

He scored 42 goals in 115 league outings and 10 goals in 24 matches in European competition in four years at the Portuguese club. During that time he had won two league titles and two Portuguese Cups.

Bonev has an aging squad but Kostadinov should have enough fitness to keep going throughout the June 10 to July 12 finals which should be a fitting final fling for a superb generation of Bulgarian players.

## Devil or God — Gomez's fate rests on France '98

PARIS (AFP) — Hernan Daro Gomez is deep into Colombian footballing tradition, having served an apprenticeship to Francisco Maturana in the World Cup four years ago in the United States and previously coached Atletico Nacional Medellin to the league title.

The 42-year-old took over almost straight after USA 94, where Colombia came last in their group after a shock defeat by the hosts.

And his managerial stock rose sharply when he took the team to third place in the 1995 Copa America. A Uruguayan newspaper survey declared him the best tactician in South America.

Colombia have as always no shortage of talent at their disposal yet the blend tends to leave something to be desired.

Many pundits undoubtedly question the wisdom of putting faith in 36-year-old U.S.-based playmaker

Carlos Valderrama, but he has the precious commodity of experience.

After seeing his side drawn with England, Romania and Tunisia, Gomez admitted that progressing from Group G would not be an easy proposition.

"England and Romania are two teams with great character, they'll be difficult opponents. And Tunisia play a focused, physical game," said Gomez.

Gomez, nicknamed Bolillo or "truncheon" for his autocratic streak, took the Colombians to third place in the South American qualifiers behind Argentina and Paraguay.

In attack, Gomez has Parma's Faustino Asprilla to call upon, as well as Independiente Medellin's Adolfo "Tren" Valencia, both of whom have gained club experience in Europe.

He may also turn a blind eye to the eccentricities of "keeper" Rene Higuita, who starred in the 1990

finals but who has recently served time in prison for being implicated in a kidnapping case.

Despite their suspect temperament, under Gomez, Colombia can, at the fourth attempt on the World Cup stage, finally live up to their reputation as among the world's most gifted teams.

Yet over-demanding fans could prove the side's downfall.

Four years ago, they turned on the team after their poor showing and Andreas Escobar, who scored an own goal against the USA, was shot dead on his return to Colombia.

Gomez optimistically prefers to look to the consequences of success.

"If things go well in France I will be regarded as a god. If they don't I will be called the devil," he joked recently.

## Romario in search of World Cup glory

PARIS (AFP) — Football villain Romario was fat, past it and overpaid two years ago but has battled back to form and is ready to help Brazil retain their World Cup trophy. Outstanding in February last year in a 4-2 win over Poland — his first appearance since starring in the 1994 World Cup final — the then 31-year-old Romario was back in the limelight.

Once described as a sauna player, making money from the sweat of other people, Romario has worked hard on his fitness and has been pulling his weight admirably.

Brazilian coach Mario Zagallo has him clearly in his plans for the 1998 World Cup even if he has still not really forgiven him for an incident in last summer's Copa America in Bolivia when he limped out of the semi-final against Peru with a pulled muscle, and then ignored doctors orders to spend a night out enjoying himself in Sant Cruz de la Sierra.

Never one to sidestep controversy, Romario then announced he played better after a night on the town, to the consternation of Zagallo. Brazil went on to win that title which might have diluted Zagallo's anger towards his flawed genius.

Romario's determination to do things his way helped Brazil to their fourth World Cup title in Pasadena, California four years ago. He was the streetwise striker while Bebeto was the more disciplined frontman and their contrasting styles proved a world-title winning blend.

But after the euphoria of victory, a World Cup hangover propelled Romario downwards into a trough of controversy and personal despair. And Romario has admitted his wayward ways.

"I went through an insecure phase, where I couldn't find the right path," he once said. "Then I decided to overcome my personal problems and I promised myself I would return to the Brazil team. I trained hard and went to sleep early."

Then Zagallo gave me a chance and I couldn't blow it." Physiotherapist Nilton Petrone, who played a major part in his comeback, explained what brought about a complete turnaround in his fortunes. "Two factors have been fundamental in his return," said Petrone.

"His family life is returning to normality — he has married again and his new wife is expecting a child which gives him an emotional balance. Also he had a strong desire to return to the national team."

## Black and white for France's Zidane

PARIS (AFP) — When Zinedine Zidane takes the pitch at the World Cup finals, French fans know they are about to see either the best or the worst of probably the most gifted midfielder in Europe.

For if Zidane feels at home in a Juventus shirt, it's probably because his performances for the Italian club are always either black or white; inspirational or instantly forgettable.

His undoubted skills, but lack of continuity, have been the hallmarks of Zidane's two-season career to date in the Serie A, and few expect that to change when he returns home for this summer's finals.

Zidane, whose father's roots are in Algeria, discovered football by a kicking a ball around the concrete jungle of La Castellane, a troubled council estate on the outskirts in Marseille.

Zidane's early progress took him to nearby Cannes, where he eventually played two full seasons before joining Bordeaux in 1992.

Zidane blossomed there and his moment of glory came on March 19, 1996 in the second leg of their UEFA Cup quarter-final against mighty AC Milan: predictably, two weeks after a dismal performance by the Frenchman at San Siro, as his side slumped to a 2-0 defeat.

At Bordeaux, Zidane inspired his side to a stunning 3-0 victory. Voted 5.5 at San Siro, the Gazzetta dello Sport gave Zidane a resounding 8 for a display which made many sit up and take notice.

Bordeaux eventually lost the final to Bayern Munich, but Zidane won a prestigious transfer to Juventus, with the backing of compatriot and former Zebras' hero Michel Platini.

Like all players new to the Serie A, Zidane had a tough apprenticeship; but his creative skills and his goals soon silenced any critics.

His fervent wish last summer, as he prepared for his second season with Juventus, was to finally beat the problem of his erratic form.

"I'm aware that I still have to do more," he said. "Above all, I've got to score more goals and show greater continuity. I've got to play at a certain level for the whole season, and not just in a few matches."

And at France '98, although his recent form has been improving, the home fans can only hope there will be more of the former than the latter.

## Kinkladze deal close to finalisation

MANCHESTER (AFP) — Georgian international midfielder Giorgi Kinkladze is poised to complete a deal that will see him move from English second division side Manchester City to Dutch champions Ajax.

Kinkladze will cost Ajax around £5 million and he has already appeared on Dutch television wearing an Ajax shirt and drinking champagne with directors of the Dutch club.

"We have agreed all the figures and I am waiting for a reply from Ajax by fax for us to complete the paperwork," said Manchester City secretary Bernard Halford.

Kinkladze watched Ajax lose their last game of the season 2-1 against Utrecht on Sunday, and then happily posed for photographers and TV cameras wearing the famous red and white kit of his new club.

He also signed a contract for the benefit of the cameras, and said: "I decided long ago that I wanted to join Ajax, and negotiations have been going on for a few months."

"The incentive was the chance to play in the Champions League and for such a great club as Ajax."

"I am also delighted to be in the same side as my friend Shota Arveladze. We

have been teammates since we were boys in the same youth team for Dynamo Tbilisi."

Halford said the deal will be finalised when a transfer form reaches Manchester City from Holland.

Kinkladze's departure from England had been on the cards for months.

He joined Manchester City three years ago and his skills made him a cult hero with the club's fans, but he was unable to halt City's plunge into the second division after their second relegation in three seasons.

## Wenger refuses to gamble on Bergkamp

LONDON (AFP) — Arsenal manager Arsene Wenger said Monday he will not risk Dutch international striker Dennis Bergkamp in Saturday's FA Cup final unless he is certain he will last the match.

Bergkamp's performances as the Gunners lifted the English Championship saw him voted as Player of the Year by his fellow professionals and Footballer of the Year by the nation's football writers.

But the Dutch ace missed Arsenal's last three games of the season with a hamstring injury and Wenger maintains that Bergkamp will only play against Newcastle United at Wembley if he is 100 percent recovered.

"Dennis has improved since Friday, but we won't really know about him until later in the week," said Wenger.

"We will give him a big fitness test on Thursday and if he gets through that training session then he should be alright to play."

"But Dennis has the World Cup to look forward to in the summer and it would not be right for us to risk him."

"If it wasn't for the World Cup we could take a chance because he could rest for the six weeks afterwards."

"But it would not be right to play him,

and see him last only 10 minutes before damaging the hamstring again."

"It would not be worth it however much it would interest us to have him fit for the game. He will not play if there is any risk."

Wenger was speaking as he collected the Manager of the Year award at the annual dinner of the League Managers' Association.

Wenger, who has previously picked up similar awards in France and Japan, described himself as "very proud and honoured" to have won the award.

He said: "In England every game is such a battle and it makes the Championship so hard to win."

"I think though that this is a good occasion for me to thank my staff. They have worked so hard for me and like the players they have been exceptional and magnificent."

## Returning from injury, Chang eyes French Open

ROME (AFP) — It's a slow road back for Michael Chang.

Coming off a knee ligament injury, the American finds himself on his feet on the court, the European red clay that brought him his lone Grand Slam title.

With play at the French Open starting May 24, Chang is getting his game in gear one match at a time. "This is going to be an important week for me," the 15-year-old said after beating past Andrei Medvedev in three tough sets Monday to reach the second round of the Italian Open. "I came to Europe a little bit earlier than I usually do. That will help me."

Top seed Pete Sampras, asked to get his clay court game straightened out ahead of the one Grand Slam event he has never won, played Thomas Enqvist Tuesday. Other first-round action Tuesday saw U.S. Open champion Pat Rafter against the Russian, No. 3 Marcelo Rios coming back from an old injury, against local old card entrant Massimo Mucchetti, and defending champion Alex Corretja against Mark Woodhouse.

"Being healthy and physically fit is important to play in French. You can't expect a win otherwise. It's just as possible," Chang said after his 6-2, 4-6, 6-3 win Monday. It is his career's defining moment, the 15-year-old overcoming leg cramps to beat an Italian on route to the 1999 French Open title. The American's ranking soared a career-best No. 2 in 1997 but has recently plummeted to No. 14. A big win was his second.

## Tauziat eliminated from German op

BERLIN (AFP) — Seeded duo of Andre Tauziat of France and Boris Becker of Germany were eliminated from the opening round of the German Open on Monday.

Becker, the 19th seed, came in second behind against German Sandra Kucuk, losing 6-3, 6-4. Tauziat, who plays faster than Becker, lost in the first round of the Italian Open last week to Andre Agassi.

Becker, a recent semi-finalist in Hamburg, took the first set 6-4. Tauziat then allowed the German to rally for a 2-6, 7-6, 6-3 victory. Having lost the three games of the first round, Becker got his first win in the third round of the tournament.

Becker was a wild in her return to the court after a long absence. She produced a dreadful performance as she jumped on the court in the first round of the tournament.

"I was a good player," said Becker. "I have to be better than me."

Becker was a wild in her return to the court after a long absence. She produced a dreadful performance as she jumped on the court in the first round of the tournament.

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TODAY AT	PHILADELPHIA 1'	PHILADELPHIA 2'	PLAZA	CONCORD	GALLERIA 2	GALLERIA 1	Hisham Yanes Theatre
	Bruce Willis & Gary Oldman ... in <b>THE FIFTH ELEMENT</b> Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30	<b>ED</b> Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30	The biggest cinema production <b>TITANIC</b> Shows: 12:00, 3:30, 7:00, 10:30 p.m.	CONCORD 1' Farouq Fikri & Wajia Amr ... in <b>HANHEB WANNABE</b> (ARABIC) Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30 CONCORD 2' ISMAILIA RAYEH GAI. KAMANANA Shows: 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30	ABDOUN <b>FORGET PARIS</b> & still showing evenings <b>TITANIC</b>	ABDOUN <b>THE MIRROR HAS TWO FACES</b> & still showing evenings <b>TITANIC</b>	STARTING APRIL 6TH <b>Don't Laugh Please</b> We're Jordanian Starring Hisham Yanes, Amal Dabbas, Rania Kurdi and the group at 8:30 p.m. For reservations call: 4640155, 4625155



## Returning from injury, Chang eyes French Open

ROME (AP) — It's a slow road back for Michael Chang.

Coming off a knee ligament injury, the American finds himself on his favorite surface, the European red clay that brought him his lone Grand Slam title.

With play at the French Open starting May 25, Chang is getting his game in gear one match at a time.

"This is going to be an important week for me," the No. 15 seed said after battling past Andrei Medvedev in three tough sets Monday to reach the second round of the Italian Open. "I came to Europe a little bit earlier than I usually do. That will help me."

Top seed Pete Sampras, looking to get his clay court game straightened out ahead of the one Grand Slam event he has never won, played Thomas Enqvist Tuesday.

Other first-round action Tuesday saw U.S. Open champion Pat Rafter against Marc Rosset, No. 3 Marcelo Rios, coming back from an elbow injury, against local wild card entrant Marzio Martelli, and defending titlist Alex Corretja against Mark Woodforde.

"Being healthy and physically fit is important to play the French. You can't expect to win otherwise. It's just not possible," Chang said after his 6-2, 4-6, 6-3 win Monday.

In his career's defining moment, the then-17-year-old overcame leg cramps to upset Ivan Lendl en route to the 1989 French Open title.

The American's ranking reached a career-best No. 2 in 1997 but has recently plummeted to No. 14. A big reason was his second-



Moroccan Hicham Arazi hits a backhand to Czech Petr Korda during their first round Italian Open match (Reuters photo)



Czech Petr Korda hits a backhand to Moroccan Arazi Hicham during their first round Italian Open match (Reuters photo)

round ouster in January at the Australian Open, where he had been to the semifinals and final the previous two years.

Last week at the clay event in Hamburg, Germany, Chang showed he has work to do if he is to challenge at Roland Garros, losing in the second round

to Francisco Clavet, who is ranked 40th.

Three of the world's top seven players were ousted Monday in straight sets at the Italian Open. Hicham Arazi beat No. 2 Petr Korda 6-2, 6-4. Bohdan Ulihrach downed No. 5 Greg Rusedski 7-5, 7-6 (10-8), and Filip Dewulf eliminated

No. 7 Jonas Bjorkman 6-2, 6-3.

French Open champions Gustavo Kuerten and Thomas Muster won their matches, while Sergi Bruguera, a two-time titlist at Roland Garros, quit during his match with Sweden's Magnus Norman while trailing 6-3, 1-0.

## Jordanian team leaves for Asian Taekwondo Championship

By Munther Murjan  
Special to the Jordan Times

ARRIVING WEDNESDAY in Vietnam is Jordan's national taekwondo team which left the Kingdom earlier this week and headed for Taiwan for a week-long training camp in preparation for the Asian Taekwondo Championship alongside 17 other nations.

Under the supervision of instructor Chen Hwa, the 18-player team left Amman armed with high spirits and morals, hoping that their hard work and skills will enable them to win the gold medals they strive to gain.

The players representing Jordan are: Hussein Tabla, Mohammed Hamed, Ammar Mustafa, Ibrahim Kamal, Faris Omari, Iyad Sayfi, Mohammed Abdulraz, Mohammed Faragheh, Shatha Asaf, Rasha Musharbash, Elisar Matar, Elham Bino, Nancy Hindi, and Fatmeh Sayyad.

Accompanying the team are officials: Wajdi Qalawi, referee Luay Khatib, and MD. Helen Simonian.

The administrative delegation also headed for Vietnam Tuesday, after remaining in Bangkok awaiting travel arrangements to come through before continuing their trip. The administrative team is headed by Majed Mansour, and includes Imad Abidah, press representative Ibrahim Haddadin, and international referee Fuad Jarwan.

The championship will officially commence on Friday preceded by preliminary administrative meetings of the Asian Taekwondo Federation. A special training course for referees is scheduled on the sidelines of the championship.

The course aims at bringing the referees up to the newly amended rules and regulations of the game. Referees Fuad Jarwan, Luay Khatib in addition to Wajdi Qalawi are expected to participate in the course.

## Jones runs personal best in Chinese race

CHENGDU, China (AFP) — America's 100 metres world champion Marion Jones ran a personal best 10.71sec in a race billed as crowning the world's fastest woman here on Tuesday.

"It was very good. I'm very excited," she said after crossing the line.

Sevatheda Fynes of the Bahamas came in second at 11.06sec with compatriot Chandra Sturup third in 11.09sec.

The 22-year-old Jones' previous best was 10.76 seconds in Brussels in August last year.

China's best hope, Li Xuemei, came in a disappointing fourth at 11.21sec after clocking 1997's second-fastest 100m with a surprise 10.79 at last year's Chinese National Games.

"I never expected such a bad run. It was not a clean start," she said.

## SCOREBOARD

### National League

Atlanta	8	Cincinnati	1
Pittsburgh	5	Colorado	2
Houston	5	Florida	2
St Louis	7	Milwaukee	0
Chicago Cubs	4	Arizona	2
Philadelphia	5	Los Angeles	2
San Diego	2	NY Mets	1
San Francisco	7	Montreal	2

### American League

Tampa Bay	4	Cleveland	2
Baltimore	4	Minnesota	0
Texas	8	Boston	2
Kansas City at NY Yankees	—	Postponed	

### NHL (series best-of-seven)

• Eastern Conference Semifinals	
Ottawa 4 Washington 3	
Washington leads series, 2-1	
• Western Conference Semifinals	
Dallas 1 Edmonton 0	
Dallas leads series, 2-1	



Chicago Cubs rookie pitcher Kerry Woods throws in the first inning against the Arizona Diamondbacks in Phoenix May 11. Kerry was named National League Player of the Week for his 20-strikeout performance against the Houston Astros last week (Reuters photo)

## Tauziat eliminated from German open

BERLIN (AFP) — Seeded duo

Nathalie Tauziat of France and Patty Schnyder of Switzerland both failed to survive the opening day of the German Open on Monday.

Anna Kournikova swept aside Czech qualifier Radka Bobkova, while Jennifer Capriati's comeback bid hit an obstacle.

Tauziat, the 10th seed, came off second best against American Sandra Cacic, losing 7-5, 6-4. Cacic also beat her at Indian Wells in March and Tauziat, who prefers faster surfaces, also lost in the first round of the Italian Open last week to Serena Williams.

After leading 3-1, Tauziat conceded the last four games of the first set and after breaking to lead 4-3 in the second she lost the next three games and the match.

Schnyder, a recent semifinalist in Hamburg but seeded an unlucky 13, took the first set against Maria Sanchez-Lorenzo, but then allowed the Spaniard to rally for a 2-6, 7-6 (7/3), 6-3 victory. Having lost the last three games of the first set, Sanchez-Lorenzo got her own back in the third by winning four straight games to take a 5-2 lead.

Kournikova was swift in her demolition of Bobkova, winning 6-2, 6-1 in just 48 minutes. The 16-year-old Russian admitted to feeling very comfortable on the courts of the Rot Weiss Club, and was then questioned about being voted one of the 50 most beautiful people in the world in a recent poll.

Capriati came through the qualifying rounds successfully, but then produced a dreadful performance as she slumped 6-3, 6-1 to Tamarine Tanasugarn of Thailand.

"She's a good player," said Capriati of Tanasugarn. "It wasn't my day and I have to say she played better than me."

Ninth seed Iva Majoli of

Croatia was the only other seed in action on the opening day, and she overcame Anne-Gaëlle Sidot of France 6-3, 6-2.

Notable losers included Ruxandra Dragomir of Romania, who was beaten 2-6, 6-3, 7-6 (7/4) by Julie Halard-Decugis of France, and Indonesia's Yayuk Basuki, who fell 6-4, 6-3 to Maria Alejandra Ventu of Venezuela.

The top seed in the \$926,000 event is Martina Hingis, chasing her third title in three weeks after winning in Hamburg and Rome.

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Sameh Madani  
Managing Director



Amid tense ties with Israel

# Swiss president to hold talks with PNA, Israel

Cotti meets with King in Amman Saturday

BERN (AP) — Switzerland's tense relations with Jews and Israel over Holocaust victims and Mossad spying will be tested this week during an official visit whose details were announced Tuesday.

Swiss President Flavio Cotti is to meet the Israeli and Palestinian leaders on the four-day tour whose planning has been dogged by controversy.

Mr. Cotti will arrive Friday in Tel Aviv and go first to Gaza to meet with Palestinian President Yasser Arafat, Swiss Foreign Ministry official Christian Bickelstorf told a news conference.

The Swiss president, who also is foreign minister, will make a trip to Jordan on Saturday to see King Hussein in Amman, then return to Israel.

He will meet Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Monday.

The Swiss government only gave the green light to Mr. Cotti's visit last month. It was put on hold after five Mossad agents in February were caught trying to bug a small apartment block in the Swiss capital, Bern, prompting an apology from Israel.

One agent, caught with wiretapping equipment, was held until late April and only released after Israel paid some \$2 million in bail money.

The incident added to strains with Israel already stemming from pressures to compensate the heirs of Holocaust victims who claimed Swiss banks held assets of their relatives who perished at the hands of the Nazis.

Israeli officials have accused the banks of dragging their feet in trying to find the money and its owners.

Underscoring that the issue remains of concern, Switzerland's damage-control diplomat, Thomas Borer, head of Switzerland's task-force on World War II, is to travel with Mr. Cotti.

Switzerland has taken a number of measures to investigate its wartime past, including a fund for needy Holocaust survivors and a panel headed by former Federal Reserve chief Paul Volcker investigating claims to assets in Switzerland.

Mr. Cotti's visit will be the first by a Swiss cabinet member to Israel since 1985. It is

the first-ever visit by a Swiss president.

Mr. Cotti will be welcomed to Israel by President Ezer Weizman and Israeli Parliament Speaker Dan Tichon, the Swiss president will visit the Yad Vashem Holocaust Memorial Sunday.

Mr. Cotti's visit is aimed at "a better understanding of the region and its problems" and at clarifying Switzerland's contribution to the faltering Mideast peace process, Mr. Bickelstorf said.

Israel is Switzerland's most important export partner in the region, importing 1.4 billion Swiss francs (\$1 billion) in Swiss goods last year, according to the Swiss Foreign Ministry.

"Our bilateral relations are warm and friendly," it added in a statement.

Mr. Cotti will return to Switzerland Tuesday, thus missing the brief visit by President Bill Clinton to give a trade speech in Geneva on Monday. Some Swiss lawmakers have been urging Mr. Cotti to meet with Mr. Clinton — to defuse some of the same tensions over the Holocaust that Switzerland has with Israel.

## Israeli government approves nomination of new army chief

TEL AVIV (AFP) — The Israeli cabinet unanimously approved on Tuesday the appointment of General Shaul Mofaz, the Iranian-born former head of an elite commando unit, as the new military chief of staff.

Gen. Mofaz, 50, who is currently deputy chief of staff, will replace General Amnon Lipkin-Shahak, who is due to retire in two months, officials said.

Gen. Mofaz was born in Iran and arrived in Israel with his parents at the age of nine. He has notably served as deputy chief of Sayeret Metkal, the military's most elite commando unit, as head of the southern command which includes the Gaza Strip and as head of planning for the chief of staff.

Gen. Mofaz's chief rival for

the post was former deputy chief of staff General Matan Vilnai, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's preferred choice.

But Defence Minister Yitzhak Mordechai, a former general who was passed over for the top army job, wanted Gen. Mofaz.

According to widespread Israeli press reports, Mr. Mordechai opposed Gen. Vilnai's appointment because of a long history of personal rivalry between the two men.

During Tuesday's cabinet debate, Mr. Mordechai denied this and insisted he chose Gen. Mofaz because of his qualities and the "challenges" facing the Israeli army in the years to come, Israeli radio reported.

But Ori Orr, a former general who is now a deputy in

parliament for the opposition Labour Party, criticised Mr. Mordechai's choice, saying Gen. Mofaz lacked top-level military experience and that his appointment had created a "deep malaise" among army brass.

Gen. Vilnai voluntarily left the post of deputy chief of staff around a year ago to study in the United States in preparation for his expected promotion to chief of staff.

"Mordechai's intervention to prevent Gen. Vilnai from getting the chief of staff post and instead place his own candidate in the job is unprecedented in the military history of Israel and could cause serious damage to the army leadership," said Amir Oren, military commentator for the Haaretz newspaper.

He will be replaced in

## First Arab-Israeli appointed to Israeli supreme court

TEL AVIV (AFP) — An Arab Israeli judge has been appointed to the supreme court for the first time in the Jewish state's history, judicial sources said Tuesday.

Abdul Rahman Zoabi, 65, is currently deputy chairman of the Nazareth district court in the northern region of Galilee, where he has a reputation for an uncompromising attitude towards criminals.

Mr. Zoabi is due to take up his post in the supreme court within a year, and in accordance with tradition he will

first undergo a trial period where his ability will be under scrutiny from his fellow supreme court justices.

Mr. Zoabi's promotion to the highest court in the land was put forward by the chairman of the supreme court, Aharon Barak, and approved by Justice Minister Tzahi Hanegbi.

He finished his law studies at Tel Aviv University in 1960, and is a member of the Abraham Foundation which works to improve Arab-Jewish relations.

Mr. Zoabi was the first Arab Israeli to be selected for an official commission of inquiry — he was one of the five members of the Meir Shagmar panel which investigated the murder of 29 Muslims at Hebron's Temple of the Patriarchs by a Jewish extremist in 1994.

During the inquiry he was involved in questioning the head of Israel's internal security agency Shin Bet and senior army officers, as well as the leaders of Jewish settlers in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

## Pollard thanks Israel for recognising him as its spy

TEL AVIV (AP) — Jonathan Pollard, who is serving a life sentence for passing U.S. military secrets to Israel, said Tuesday he was grateful the Israeli government finally recognised him as an agent.

Pollard hopes Israel's acknowledgement, which came 13 years after his arrest for spying, will help him win early release.

Previous Israeli governments denied any ties to Pollard, saying his handlers were part of a rogue operation. Government spokesman Moshe Fogel acknowledged Tuesday that "mistakes were made regarding the Pollard case in the past." However, some warned that the decision could hurt Israeli-U.S.

relations. "The mistake is to turn this from a humanitarian case into a political one and to confess to Israeli espionage in America," said Labour Party lawmaker Yossi Beilin.

Pollard's wife, Esther, has said her husband gave Israel information in the 1980s about the arms buildup in neighbouring countries — information that some U.S. officials didn't want Israel to have.

Pollard said he was elated by the government's decision. "I am relieved that the truth has finally come out, thankful that the government had the courage and the integrity to acknowledge the truth," Pollard told Israel TV's Channel 2 by phone, adding that he wanted to "come home to Israel."

On Monday, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu acknowledged that the former U.S. naval analyst "acted as an Israeli agent" and said that Cabinet Secretary Dan Naveh would visit Pollard on Friday in his prison in North Carolina.

"This is the beginning of the end of my nightmare," Pollard told the daily Maariv. "I am full of appreciation because I feel, for the first time, like an equal citizen of the state of Israel."

In return for Mr. Netanyahu's acknowledgement, Pollard agreed to drop a Supreme Court petition that Israel feared would force the government to explain intelligence gathering procedures.



SWEETS AFTER THE NUKE TESTS: Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) President Kushabho Thakre (C) is offered traditional Hindu sweets by a party worker during celebrations outside the party headquarters Tuesday, after it was announced that India had detonated nuclear devices Monday at a test range in Rajasthan. The governing Hindu nationalists hailed the underground tests, calling them an unprecedented boost for the world's largest democracy. May 16th has been designated as a day of national celebrations (AFP photo)

## France unhappy with Israel's choice for ambassador

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Israel's cabinet unanimously approved Tuesday the appointment of Elihu Ben Elissar as the next Israeli ambassador to France, despite reported French objections to the choice.

Mr. Ben Elissar has been serving as Israel's ambassador to the United States for the past two years, but Israeli press reports said Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu felt he had failed to adequately defend Israel's tough stance in the peace process to the U.S. administration.

He will be replaced in Washington by veteran diplomat Zalman Shoval, a close associate of Mr. Netanyahu who has already served as Israel's envoy to the United States.

Last week the Haaretz newspaper reported that France had expressed strong reservations about the appointment of Mr. Ben Elissar, a former official of the Mossad spy agency and an outspoken hawk on matters concerning the Mideast peace process.

Haaretz said French officials were irked that a diplomat who failed in Washington was considered appropriate to handle Israeli-French relations and France's ambassador to Israel, Jean-Noel Bouillane de Lacoste, personally complained about the appointment to the foreign ministry.

Mr. Ben Elissar also earned France's hostility by severely criticising Paris for its ties to Iraq when he was chairman of the parliamentary foreign affairs and defence committee at the time of the Gulf war in the early 1990s.

## Yilmaz faces corruption probe vote

ANKARA (R) — Turkey's parliament was meeting on Tuesday to decide whether to set up a commission to investigate opposition corruption charges against conservative Prime Minister Mesut Yilmaz.

Mehmet Gokulay, a senior deputy of the conservative opposition headed by Mr. Yilmaz's arch-rival Tansu Ciller, said the investigation motion submitted by his party accused Mr. Yilmaz of incurring inflated costs in a government airport tender.

Mr. Yilmaz's minority government came to power last June after the fall of an Islamist-led coalition with Ms. Ciller's conservatives.

The 550-seat parliament voted last month to set up a similar commission to investigate Mr. Yilmaz's wealth after also launching a probe of Ms. Ciller's assets.

## Iraq asks Interpol to hunt opponents abroad

BAGHDAD (AP) — President Saddam Hussein has asked the Interpol to hunt down opponents abroad and urged government ministers to file lawsuits against them in Iraqi courts, newspapers reported Tuesday.

They said Mr. Hussein made the comments during a cabinet meeting this week in which "negative practices" in some ministries were brought up.

Mr. Hussein, who is also the country's prime minister, said officials from a number of government ministries had fled abroad after stealing unspecified amounts of money.

He did not name the officials, but said once abroad, they join the Iraqi opposition and come under U.S. payroll for protection.

The Iraqi leader did not say how many Iraqis had fled the country nor say how much money was allegedly taken out of the country.

At least a dozen Iraqi envoys assigned to Iraqi missions abroad have defected to Western countries since the 1991 Gulf War.

However, state-controlled

newspapers have recently focused on embezzlement in Iraqi ministries and given instances of officials fleeing the country with millions of dollars.

"We have to pursue all deserters in accordance with international laws and raise their issue in Iraqi courts and with the Interpol," the newspapers quoted Mr. Hussein.

"We are under moral obligation to uproot evil in its cradle so that it cannot spread," he was quoted as saying.

Newspapers have also increased their coverage of the smuggle of commodities from the sanctions-hit Iraq to neighbouring countries.

The drastic decline in the value of the Iraqi dinar has made most goods in Iraq cheaper than in neighbouring states.

The dinar now trades at 1,455 to the U.S. dollar. One dinar was officially worth more than three dollars prior to the U.N.

embargo imposed on Iraq for invading Kuwait in 1990. The average salary of a civil servant is about 5,000 dinars (less than \$3).

Mr. Hussein told his ministers he believed Iraq was in a state of war, not necessarily with the United States, but with "the lobbies of our ministries."

papers quoted Mr. Hussein as telling his ministers.

The papers did not say if Mr. Hussein had formally asked Interpol to track down the dissidents.

It was not clear if the Interpol would be willing to arrest Iraqi dissidents or how it would go about it.

Mr. Hussein on Monday sacked his labour and social affairs minister, Abdel-Aziz Mohammad Saleh Al Sayegh. No reason was

given for the dismissal.

It is the first time Mr. Hussein publicly requests international help to stem the flight of Iraqi officials and curtail incidence of theft.

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## Turkey monopolising Tigris, Euphrates — Iraq

BAGHDAD (AFP) — Iraq has accused Turkey of monopolising the waters of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers as a tool to put pressure on both Baghdad and Damascus.

Turkey is violating international conventions by building dams on the two rivers without taking into consideration the legitimate rights of the other countries, which share them, a foreign ministry spokesman said late Monday.

The spokesman, quoted by the Iraqi News Agency, condemned "the pressure applied on Iraq and Syria by exploiting the problem of the waters of the Tigris and Euphrates."

"The Turkish government is requested to revise its policies and take into account the rights of its neighbours and the interests of the Arab World, especially as Ankara is still helping the U.S.-British campaign against Iraq."

Ankara, which supported the U.S.-led coalition during the 1991 Gulf war over Kuwait, allows the use of an air base in southeast Turkey for Western fighters to patrol the skies of Kurdish-held northern Iraq.

Baghdad and Damascus have repeatedly accused Turkey of denying them their full rights with its massive GAP water project in Anatolia. Both the Euphrates and Tigris originate in Turkey.

## U.S. citizens demonstrate in Baghdad against U.N. sanctions

BAGHDAD (AP) — About 80 Americans staged a demonstration here Monday against U.N. sanctions on Iraq, urging Washington to vote immediately for their abolition.

Led by former U.S. Attorney-General Ramsey Clark and Roman Catholic Bishop Thomas Gumbleton of Detroit, Michigan, the protesters gathered outside the U.S. interests section of the Polish embassy and marched through the capital.

"Stop killing Iraqi children," the protesters chanted. Some of their banners called the U.S. "the killer of Iraqi children."

Mr. Clark, who arrived with his group here Friday with \$4 million worth of medical supplies, said the purpose

of the protest was to say the sanctions were "genocidal." The sanctions, which were imposed after Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in 1990, have devastated the Iraqi economy. A U.N. report has said the embargo has caused widespread malnutrition among Iraq's 22 million people.

Baghdad says it has caused the death of hundreds of thousands of children.

Mr. Gumbleton told the Associated Press that the United States wanted to coerce the Iraqi government, but "defenceless" Iraqis were paying the price.

The U.N. Security Council says the embargo, which bars the export of all but limited amounts of Iraqi oil, will not be lifted

until Baghdad proves it has rid itself of long-range missiles and weapons of mass destruction.

Iraq claims to have eliminated such weapons, but U.N. arms monitors have repeatedly accused it of withholding relevant information.

Mr. Clark — the founder of the humanitarian group, International Action Centre — said the behaviour of Iraq's government does not justify the sanctions.

"It does not matter how awful the [Iraqi] government might be... it cannot justify the killing of babies and children," he said.

Mr. Clark and Gumbleton pledged to continue their campaign against sanctions back in the United States.



Dutch prince works as a banker

AMSTERDAM (AP) — Prince Johan Friso, second in line to the Dutch throne, will work as a banker for Goldman Sachs starting in August, Dutch newspapers reported Monday. The 29-year-old prince will be based in London, dealing with stock transactions, mergers and takeovers. This won't be the first time the prince goes to work for an American company.

The original "Titanic" is 6 hours

BONN (AFP) — Drastic editing in the cutting room saved cinema-goers from sitting through six hours of the blockbuster "Titanic" finally released in its "shortened" version of just over three hours. Producer Jon Landau told the German daily Berliner Morgenpost that entire scenes were ditched to parcel the film into its 195-minute format. Languishing on the cutting-room floor were scenes showing the launch of the mammoth ship and those in which the floundering vessel appeals for help.

Jackson casino project

DETROIT (AP) — Michael Jackson may be taking his plans for a mega-casino project to Africa. The pop superstar and Detroit millionaire Don Barden want to build a casino, hotel and theme park complex, and last week the two toured sites in Las Vegas and the U.S. Virgin Islands. Now they're headed to Africa. "We have agreed to be partners but haven't decided where and to what extent," Barden said in Sunday's Detroit News. "We will have a major announcement."

Larry King signs \$7 million contract with CNN

NEW YORK (AFP) — Larry King, CNN's star talk show host, has signed a new contract with the news network for \$7 million per year, the New York Times reported Tuesday. King, who hosts the daily segment of celebrity interviews "Larry King Live" told the Times that the five-year contract which includes salary and stock options "shows that cable is competing on all levels now" with network television. King, 64, has hosted the show since 1985, when he started at a salary of \$200,000 a year.

Jackie Chan new house

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Martial-arts star Jackie Chan has bought a place where he can put his fast-flying feet up. The 44-year-old action hero paid \$3 million for a gated four-bedroom home in Beverly Hills with a pool and a five-car garage, the Los Angeles Times reported Sunday. His newest movie, "Rush Hour," is scheduled to hit theatres in September.

3,500 people dance to fund AIDS

VIENNA (AFP) — More than 3,500 people danced the night away at the sixth annual Vienna "Life Ball" which collects funds for AIDS research. Masked balls are a Viennese tradition, but the "Life Ball" went beyond traditional to the extravagant and the outlandish. "It's unique," said press officer Klaus Peter Vollmann. "I don't know any other city where you can see the chandelier dancing alongside a drag-queen." The ball has gained increasing credibility in political circles in recent years, and those attending Saturday night included Interior Minister Karl Schloegl, Women's Affairs Minister Barbara Prammer as well as Chancellor Viktor Klima.

Pope lauds King's p...  
VATICAN (AP) — Pope John Paul II lauded King Hussein of Jordan on Tuesday for his efforts to establish a comprehensive peace in the Middle East. The Pope said during a meeting with King Hussein in Amman that the Jordanian monarch's role in the peace process was "very important." He also praised the king's efforts to improve relations between the Muslim and Christian communities in Jordan. The Pope's visit to Jordan is part of a larger tour of the Middle East, where he is expected to meet with other leaders and discuss the situation in the region. The Pope's comments were seen as a strong endorsement of King Hussein's efforts to bring about a lasting peace in the Middle East.

Albright bring N...  
WASHINGTON (AP) — U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright said Tuesday that she would bring a new report on the situation in the Balkans to the U.N. Security Council. She said the report would detail the progress of the peace process in the region and the challenges that remain. Albright said she would also discuss the report with other members of the Security Council and seek their support for the U.S. position on the Balkans. She said she would also meet with other officials from the U.N. and the European Union to discuss the situation in the region. Albright's visit to the U.N. is part of a larger effort by the U.S. to bring about a lasting peace in the Balkans.

No news of p...  
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U.S., Russia declare Ira...  
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